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**Exemplary teachers' approaches to supporting vocabulary
development during shared reading**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of

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by
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Abstract

An analysis of recent PERLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) data has shown that a group of New Zealand children are struggling to learn to read well. Vocabulary knowledge supports reading in a number of ways and research shows that reading to children and discussing texts with them helps support the development of vocabulary knowledge. This study sought to examine how four exemplary teachers of junior classes in two primary schools went about supporting the vocabulary development of their students during shared reading. The teachers completed a questionnaire and were then observed undertaking 30 shared reading lessons. They were then interviewed about their perceptions regarding vocabulary support during shared reading. Results showed that on average these teachers committed over 20% of their shared reading sessions to vocabulary development during shared reading, although there was some variation between teachers. These teachers supported their students learning of word meanings via a balanced range of avenues for acquiring vocabulary and used a rich and varied range of instructional methods to convey and secure vocabulary knowledge during shared reading. The teachers indicated that they believed that shared reading was an important context for providing support for vocabulary and that providing support for vocabulary in a balanced range of ways was important. Results are discussed in relation to recent literature pertaining to vocabulary acquisition and supporting the vocabulary development of children while reading to them.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures	x
Chapter 1 – Introduction	1
Chapter 2 – Literature Review.....	5
Introduction.....	5
Students with Reading Difficulties in New Zealand and the Simple View of Reading	5
Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading.....	7
The Way That Children Acquire Vocabulary and How Teachers Can Best Support This Process	8
The provision of definitional information	9
Experiencing words in the context of sentences and associated words	10
Actively processing words	11
Learning about metalinguistic information	12
Encountering words multiple times.....	12
Shared Reading Defined	13
Supporting Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading	16
Learning words incidentally by listening to stories.....	17
Repeated readings and their effect on learning new word meanings	23
The effects of interactions between teachers and students during shared reading on vocabulary development	27
Differentiating instructional approaches depending on the age and level of vocabulary knowledge of students.....	35
Targeting specific words for further instruction during shared reading.....	39
Summary	40

Rationale for Study	42
Chapter 3 – Methodology	44
Methodology Rationale	44
Settings and Participants	46
Selecting setting and participants.....	46
Participating Teachers	48
Description of Schools and Classes	50
Note on decile ratings.....	50
Description of School A	50
Description of School B	52
Procedure	54
Data Collection Procedures	55
Observations	55
Interviews	58
Questionnaires	59
Process of Data Analysis.....	59
Observation data	59
Analysis of Teacher Instruction Related to Supporting Vocabulary Development	61
Description of Codes Developed for Analysis of Observed Shared Reading Session Transcripts	62
Inter-Rater Reliability	65
Analysis of Additional Aspects of Vocabulary Related Teacher Talk	65
Analysis of Proportion of Teacher Instruction Related to Supporting Vocabulary	66
Analysis of Interviews	67
Analysis of Questionnaires	67
Summary	67
Chapter 4 – Results	70
Questionnaire Data.....	71
Section 1: Characteristics of Exemplary Teachers’ Shared Reading Practice That Supported Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading	72
Shared reading practices	72

Proportion of vocabulary related instruction/reading/non-vocabulary related instruction	74
Teachers' provision of multiple exposures to words	78
Timing of vocabulary instruction in relation to reading text	80
Section 2: Avenues for Learning Words and Instructional Methods	
Utilised by Teachers to Support Vocabulary Development	
During Shared Reading	82
Avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary development utilised by Teacher One	82
Teacher One's perceptions about avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary	84
Avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary development utilised by Teacher Two	86
Teacher Two's perceptions about avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary	88
Avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary development utilised by Teacher Three	89
Teacher Three's perceptions about avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary	91
Avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary development utilised by Teacher Four	93
Teacher Four's perceptions about avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary	95
Avenues for learning words and instructional methods utilised by all teachers	97
Section 3: Distinctions Between the Characteristics of Shared Reading Practice and the Instructional Methods Utilised by Teachers of Younger Junior Classes and Those of Older Junior Classes in Relation to Supporting Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading	
Shared reading practices	98

Avenues for learning words and instructional methods utilised by teachers of younger students (Years 0–1)	99
Avenues for learning words and instructional methods utilised by teachers of older students (Years 2–4)	101
Summary	103
Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusion	108
Discussion	108
Part 1: Characteristics of the Shared Reading Practice That Support Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading	109
Proportion of vocabulary related instruction/reading/non- vocabulary related instruction	109
Facilitating multiple exposures to key words by repeated readings and discussion	111
Timing of vocabulary instruction in relation to reading texts	114
Texts used by teachers	116
Setting and teacher profiles (from questionnaire data)	117
Part 2: Avenues for Learning Words and Instructional Methods Utilised to Facilitate Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading	118
Providing definitional information	119
Providing context information	124
Facilitating active processing	128
Providing metalinguistic information	132
Part 3: Distinctions Between the Characteristics of Shared Reading Practice and Instructional Methods Utilised by Teachers of Younger Junior Classes and Those of Older Junior Classes in Relation to Facilitating Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading	136
Limitations of the Current Study and Recommendations for Further Research	139
Conclusion	141
References	146

Appendices

Appendix A – Supporting Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading – Review of Studies Summary Table	155
Appendix B – Principal’s Observation Research Study Request Letter	160
Appendix C – Principal’s Information Sheet.....	162
Appendix D – Invitation Letter – Board of Trustees	164
Appendix E – Information Sheet – Board of Trustees.....	166
Appendix F – Consent Form – Board of Trustees	168
Appendix G – Teacher’s Invitation Letter.....	169
Appendix H – Information Sheet for Participating Teachers	171
Appendix I – Consent Form for Participating Teachers	173
Appendix J – Questionnaire for Teachers.....	174

List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of Tutor's Qualifications and Experience	49
Table 2: School A: Roll by Ethnicity – Term 3 2013	51
Table 3: School B: Roll by Ethnicity – Term 3 2013	53
Table 4: Table of Observations	57
Table 5: Summary of Questions Asked During Interviews	58
Table 6: Initial Teacher Talk Categories	60
Table 7: Descriptions of Codes Developed for Analysis of Vocabulary Support During Observed Shared Reading Sessions.....	63
Table 8: Summary of Teachers' Shared Reading Durations and Texts Used	73
Table 9: Text Types Used by Teachers to Conduct Shared Reading	74
Table 10: Proportion of Vocabulary Related Instruction/Reading/Non- Vocabulary Related Instruction: Teacher One, Series 1	75
Table 11: Proportion of Vocabulary Related Instruction/Reading/Non- Vocabulary Related Instruction: Teacher Two, Series 2	75
Table 12: Proportion of Vocabulary Related Instruction/Reading/Non- Vocabulary Related Instruction: Teacher Three, Series 1	76
Table 13: Proportion of Vocabulary Related Instruction/Reading/Non- Vocabulary Related Instruction: Teacher Four, Series 1	76
Table 14: Sample Proportion of Vocabulary Related Instruction/Reading/Non-Vocabulary Related Instruction – All Teachers.....	77
Table 15: Estimate of Time Spent on Vocabulary Related Instruction	78
Table 16: Number of Readings Undertaken.....	79
Table 17: Teachers' Provision of Additional Exposures of Selected Words	80
Table 18: Timing of Teachers' Vocabulary Instruction in Relation to Reading Texts	81

List of Figures

Figure 1: Avenues utilised for learning words – Teacher One	83
Figure 2: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – Teacher One.....	84
Figure 3: Avenues utilised for learning words – Teacher Two	87
Figure 4: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – Teacher Two.....	88
Figure 5: Avenues utilised for learning new words – Teacher Three	90
Figure 6: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – Teacher Three	91
Figure 7: Avenues utilised for learning new words – Teacher Four	94
Figure 8: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – Teacher Four	95
Figure 9: Avenues utilised for learning new words – all teachers.....	97
Figure 10: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – all teachers	98
Figure 11: Avenues for learning new words facilitated – teachers of younger students	100
Figure 12: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – teachers of younger students	101
Figure 13: Avenues for learning new words utilised – teachers of older students	102
Figure 14: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – teachers of older students	103
Figure 15: Associated words T-Chart – Teacher One.....	125
Figure 16: Using images and words to reinforce metalinguistic information – Teacher One	134

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Language abilities are the cornerstone of literacy development, and support the general learning and social developments that contribute to success at school. In New Zealand there is a persistent gap between a large group of students who learn to read well and a smaller group who struggle to learn to read well (Tunmer, Nicholson, Greaney, Prochnow, Chapman, & Arrow, 2008). Tunmer et al. (2008) also identified a correlation between the incidence of reading difficulties and low socio-economic status. This is a concern because research suggests that students who struggle to attain reading skills in their early years at school tend to read less frequently, with less pace and enjoyment than their peers (Stanovich, 1986). These features of their reading behaviour further hinder these children's reading development and in doing so cumulatively widen the gap between them and more able readers over time (Stanovich, 1986).

Successful readers can be viewed as individuals who are able to effectively combine decoding and language comprehension skills to achieve a good understanding of what they are reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). An understanding of vocabulary contributes to reading ability by supporting both decoding and comprehension (Tunmer & Chapman, 2012). Difficulties understanding vocabulary can hinder decoding of individual words as well as understanding sentences and passages of text (Nation & Snowling, 1998).

As a teacher of the Deaf, I worked for many years with children who had significant hearing impairments. Over the last decade the development of new and improved assistive technologies, including more efficient hearing aids and new cochlear implant technology, meant that the children I worked with had the opportunity to hear spoken language much clearer than they would have been able to had they been born in previous decades. However, although these children were now more likely to be able to hear speech nearly as well their hearing peers, they were often still starting school with lower than normal levels of general language ability. This was exemplified particularly by low levels of vocabulary knowledge.

As a Resource Teacher working with these students in mainstream classrooms, I began to notice that there were often other sensory-typical children in their classes who might also benefit from the language development programmes we provided for our hearing impaired students. Conversations with classroom teachers confirmed that they believed that there was a significant group of students who arrived at school with low levels of general language and vocabulary ability. These teachers often also expressed their concerns about how they might best go about supporting vocabulary development for these students. These observations and conversations prompted me to want to explore how mainstream class teachers might go about meeting the vocabulary development needs of these students, and led me to conduct the current study.

The term vocabulary knowledge can be applied to knowledge of written or spoken words and refers to the process of knowing or learning new word meanings, either in print or spoken language (Beck & McKeown, 2008). Typically, young children acquire vocabulary knowledge through a process of establishing relationships with known concepts and words and refining meanings through repeated exposure to words in varying contexts (Beck & McKeown, 1991). Acquiring vocabulary can be a complex process, and therefore it is helpful if a number of avenues to learning words are made available for children (Beck & McKeown, 1991). Stahl and Nagy (2006) suggest that experiencing words in the context of texts and engaging in interactions about words that occur in texts are effective ways to support vocabulary development. Shared reading is an instructional context in which there are opportunities for teachers to facilitate listening to texts, reading and interactions about words to support vocabulary. This instructional context may therefore be an effective context for supporting the development of vocabulary.

In New Zealand, shared reading is considered to be an instructional context in which teachers can facilitate the development of a range of language and literacy skills (Ministry of Education, 2003). The Ministry of Education (2003) suggests that shared reading be a core component of

reading programmes for junior and senior primary school classes. The Ministry of Education (2003) also encourages teachers to use shared reading to support children's vocabulary development during shared reading (Ministry of Education, 2003).

Because of the potential efficacy of shared reading as an instructional context for supporting vocabulary development and the advice of the Ministry of Education (2003) about using shared reading in reading programmes as a means of supporting vocabulary development, I was interested in how New Zealand teachers go about supporting vocabulary development during shared reading.

There is a paucity of research about how teachers go about supporting vocabulary during shared reading in New Zealand. In order to undertake an investigation into the practice of New Zealand teachers in relation to vocabulary support during shared reading I was particularly interested in two areas of previous research: research that had looked at the ways that children best acquire vocabulary knowledge (Beck & McKeown, 2007; McKeown & Beck, 2006; Stahl, 2005; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Stahl & Nagy, 2006), and research that had examined how teachers might best go about supporting vocabulary development while reading and discussing texts with children (Beck & McKeown, 2007; Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Brett, Rothlein, & Hurley, 1996; Elley, 1989; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; McLeod & McDade, 2011; Nicholson & Whyte, 1992; Penno, Wilkinson, & Moore, 2002; Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Sénéchal, Thomas, & Monker, 1995; Walsh & Blewitt, 2006; Walsh & Rose, 2013). Both these areas of research suggested that the balanced listening, reading, viewing and instructional components of shared reading made it a potentially powerful context for supporting the development of vocabulary knowledge in young children. This research, and my interest in the role of vocabulary knowledge in reading acquisition, prompted me to conduct the current study.

In this study I wanted to investigate how teachers of junior classes in two New Zealand schools go about supporting vocabulary development during

shared reading. I sought to answer the following questions: 1) What are the characteristics of the shared reading practice of exemplary teachers of junior classes that support vocabulary development during shared reading? 2) What avenues for learning words do these teachers utilise, and what instructional methods to support vocabulary development do they use during shared reading? and 3) What distinctions are there between the characteristics of shared reading practice and instructional methods utilised by teachers of younger junior classes and those of older junior classes in relation to supporting vocabulary development during shared reading?

Research suggests that children from lower socio-economic homes tend to have lower levels of vocabulary knowledge than those from middle and upper socio-economic homes (Hart & Risley, 1999). Because of this I was interested in how teachers in schools in lower socio-economic settings go about supporting vocabulary during shared reading. To answer the research questions, four exemplary junior class teachers in two low decile schools were selected. To do this, schools that were considered to have exemplary literacy practices were recommended by the Student Teacher Practice Coordinator at a Faculty of Education. The principals of these schools were then approached and asked to recommend two teachers that they considered to have exemplary literacy practice. These teachers completed a questionnaire to provide a profile of themselves and their class group. I then observed these teachers undertaking several series of shared reading sessions. Subsequent to completing the observations, I conducted semi-structured interviews with all the participating teachers. Based on a review of literature, I developed a framework for observing teachers' support of vocabulary development during shared reading. Using this framework and an inductive process of constant comparison across teachers, I developed a series of codes that were later used to analyse observation transcripts. This observation data, along with data from the interviews and questionnaires form the basis of the results presented in this study.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter first provides an overview of the situation for children with reading difficulties in New Zealand, and outlines how early reading skills may be acquired. Secondly, it discusses the nature of the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading ability. Thirdly, this chapter provides a summary of the ways that children may best acquire new vocabulary and how teachers can support young children's vocabulary development. Fourthly, because this study seeks to investigate support for vocabulary development during shared reading in New Zealand, a discussion of shared reading in New Zealand is provided. Fifthly, to examine the evidence of the efficacy of instruction intended to support vocabulary development during shared reading; a review of recent studies that have investigated instructional characteristics used to support vocabulary development while reading to children is included. Finally, a rationale for the current study is provided, followed by the study's research questions derived from the literature review.

Students with Reading Difficulties in New Zealand and the Simple View of Reading

By carrying out an analysis of New Zealand children's performance in the PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, 2004) Tunmer et al. (2008) have identified a trend in the groupings of New Zealand children who struggle to acquire early reading proficiency. Tunmer et al. (2008) noted a persistent gap in reading achievement between two groups of students in New Zealand schools: a large group who are reading well and a smaller group who are having reading difficulties. Tunmer et al. (2008) identified a correlation between the socio-economic status of these students and the incidence of reading difficulties. Tunmer et al. (2008) suggest that there may be some aspects of teaching in New Zealand classrooms that are failing to adequately meet the needs of the group of children who are experiencing reading difficulties.

Gough and Tunmer (1986) proposed a model of reading that provides a context within which to analyse the reading process. Their model delineates reading into two components: decoding and language comprehension. Called the Simple View of Reading (SVR), this model suggests that reading comprehension is the product of both decoding and language comprehension. This means that both accurate decoding and adequate language comprehension combine to support reading comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). Using this model, teachers can predict that, in most circumstances, if language comprehension skills are age appropriate or higher, once accurate decoding is achieved, reading comprehension will be adequate (Pressley, 2006; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2004).

Gough and Tunmer's (1986) model provides a framework within which to examine reading difficulties. Some readers can have specific difficulties decoding text (Adams, 2000; Carroll, Bower-Crane, Duff, Hulme, & Snowling, 2011). Other readers may have difficulty comprehending text after good decoding skills have been established (Carroll et al., 2011). Another group of students struggle with both decoding and comprehension (Carroll et al., 2011). Early difficulties learning to decode and/or comprehend text can have a cumulative effect on a student's reading development and general learning, leading to widening gaps between less able and more able readers as they progress through their schooling (Stanovich, 1986).

The language skills associated with reading can be categorised into those that contribute to decoding and those that contribute to reading comprehension (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). The first group of skills include: phonological awareness and letter-sound correspondence (Scarborough, 2002). In conjunction with these skills, reading comprehension is supported through a complex interaction of cognitive and language abilities, including background knowledge, verbal reasoning, knowledge of language structures, literacy knowledge and vocabulary knowledge (Scarborough, 2002).

Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading

Within the process of reading comprehension, an understanding of the meanings of individual words is essential to understanding passages of text (Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Nicholson & Dymock, 2010; Pressley, 2006). Accomplished readers synchronise decoding and language comprehension skills to facilitate reading comprehension. The Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) characterises the relationship between decoding and language as multiplicative. This means that weakness in one area can affect performance in other areas (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2004; Tunmer & Chapman, 2012; Ziegler & Goswami, 2005).

Vocabulary knowledge can affect reading fluency as well as reading comprehension. Not being able to access meanings quickly and efficiently can cause a bottleneck in comprehension, forcing readers to infer meanings from the context (Perfetti, Landi, & Oakhill, 2005). Making inferences about word meanings may support comprehension; however, gaining meaning in this manner requires readers to have accurate understandings of a good proportion of the words in a passage (up to 90%) (Perfetti et al., 2005). Without this level of vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension may be at risk. Research has also indicated a connection between some children's ability to read words automatically (by sight) and their ability to process semantic information about words (Nation & Snowling, 1998). Research by Nation and Snowling (1998) indicates that children who struggle to comprehend what they read also struggle to read non-phonetic and low frequency words by sight, creating a decoding bottleneck that in turn affects their ability to read fluently.

Tunmer and Chapman (2012) examined the relationship between the vocabulary knowledge, decoding and language comprehension components of the SVR. Tunmer and Chapman (2012) administered assessments of vocabulary knowledge, non-word reading, context free word recognition, and listening and reading comprehension on 122 7–10

year-olds from urban centres in New Zealand. The contributions of these various components were analysed to quantify the proportions of their effect on reading comprehension within the SVR model. Tunmer and Chapman (2012) found that vocabulary knowledge made distinctive contributions to both decoding and language comprehension. As a result, they called for efforts to improving children's oral language skills, especially vocabulary knowledge, to be included in programmes aimed at preventing reading difficulties, alongside phonological and alphabetical decoding skills.

Students start school with different levels of vocabulary knowledge. Hart and Risley (1995) conducted a longitudinal research study of child/parent dialogues in families. They recorded every word spoken in one hour, at different times/stages over a three year period, in 42 families. Transcripts of dialogues were analysed and findings correlated to children's later school performance. Hart and Risley's (1995) research indicates significant variations in the level of young children's vocabulary knowledge which can be associated with the type of adult/child language interactions typical in their families. Hart and Risley's (1995) research also indicates a correlation between the socio-economic circumstances of a child's family, their level of vocabulary knowledge and their achievement outcomes at school.

The Way That Children Acquire Vocabulary and How Teachers Can Best Support This Process

The relationship between learning and instruction is critically important to successful education and there are a range of theories about the relationship between these factors that draw on various approaches to studying how children acquire knowledge and skills (Schunk, 2008). Schunk (2008) has identified instructional factors common to various learning theories: how materials to be taught are organised and presented, whether there are opportunities to practice new learning, whether there are opportunities for corrective feedback and to review new knowledge. For the purposes of this study, instructional methods will be defined within

the parameters of Schunk's (2008) factors as the ways in which teachers organise and present material, facilitate opportunities to practise using new skills and knowledge, and provide opportunities for feedback about, and review of, new learning.

Beck and McKeown (1991) define vocabulary acquisition as "a complex process that involves establishing relationships between concepts, organisation of concepts, and expansion and refinement of knowledge about individual words" (p. 790). Because of the complexity of this process, acquiring vocabulary knowledge happens best when a variety of avenues for learning new words are made available for children.

Researchers suggest children acquire new words best when they are exposed to and experience them in the following ways: 1) as part of instruction that provides definitional information about words, 2) by experiencing words in the context of other relevant words and sentences, 3) by engaging in active processing about words, 4) when they receive and discuss metalinguistic information about words, and 5) when children are exposed to words multiple times (Beck & McKeown, 2007; McKeown & Beck, 2006; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

The provision of definitional information

Acquiring knowledge about words via direct definitions or explanations can be an effective way for students to gain initial semantic information about words, which gives teachers the ability to provide accuracy and certainty about meanings (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Brett et al., 1996; McKeown & Beck, 2004; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Teachers can use a number of instructional methods to help children acquire knowledge about words in this manner. Dictionary definitions are one way in which teachers can provide explanations, although they may be difficult for students to understand because the language used in them can be convoluted and fragmented (McKeown & Beck, 2004; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Dictionaries are a useful way of providing a precise meaning for words, especially as most common words have multiple meanings (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Stahl and Nagy (2006) suggest that dictionaries use should

be modelled in conjunction with authentic and purposeful enquiries about word meanings, such as during guided or shared reading, rather than as an isolated exercise, as these provide more meaningful experiences of definitions that help secure them in students' memories.

Beck and McKeown (2008) discourage the use of dictionaries and suggest instead that teachers explain definitions in connected conversational speech. Beck and McKeown (2008) recommend teachers provide explanations using personal language and agents in examples so as to provide more effective and more concrete aspects to definitions than the abstract language of dictionaries. Beck and McKeown (2008) also suggest using other methods for conveying definitions, such as using images and acting out definitions, as these other modes can promote alternative connections to new word meanings.

Experiencing words in the context of sentences and associated words

Although it can be a useful component of word learning, hearing or learning a definition alone may not provide a broad enough understanding of a word to allow it to be understood and used readily in various contexts (Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). This is because the meaning of words are always to some degree effected by the context in which they occur, and a word presented in isolation does not convey the function of a word in which it is used in a specific context (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). In a review of studies, Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) found that providing definitional information alone did not significantly improve comprehension.

To further support the extension and consolidation of knowledge of word meanings, children can benefit from making connections between new words and known or partly known words (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). This can occur by experiencing new words in relation to related words and passages of text (Beck & McKeown, 2008). This context information helps students to begin to apply their understanding of a word in a variety of situations and account for shifts in the meaning of words in different contexts (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; McLeod & McDade, 2011; Stahl &

Nagy, 2006). Teachers may enhance this process by providing additional context information for words, either by presenting the word in the context of a different sentence, reading it in texts, or presenting it in association with other words of similar meaning. To assess the efficacy of learning words in the context of texts, McLeod and McDade (2011) conducted a study with 30 three to four-year-old children enrolled in early childhood centres in the United States. McLeod and McDade (2011) included nonsense words in narratives and then assessed children's understanding of the words. McLeod and McDade (2011) found that children could develop an initial understanding of these non-words by hearing them in the context of other words. In a study of 43 four to six year-old children from low-income Canadian homes, Biemiller (2005) added enriched word explanations to readings of shared texts and compared the word learning to a just reading condition. Biemiller (2005) found that the use of target words in enriched explanations increased vocabulary learning.

Actively processing words

Research has indicated that encouraging students to think actively about word meanings and actively connect new and existing knowledge can help them to secure vocabulary knowledge in their memories (Sénéchal, 1997; Stahl, 2005; Stahl & Nagy, 2006; Walsh & Blewitt, 2006). Asking students to actively process words by engaging in interactions with them about words, encourages children to develop semantic networks consisting of new and existing knowledge (Beck & McKeown, 2008; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Stahl, 2005; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). While questions that contain the novel word in them provide information for students to use to process words and reinforce their receptive vocabulary, questions that elicit novel word use by students encourage development of both their receptive and expressive vocabularies (Walsh & Blewitt, 2006). As with the provision of definitional and contextual information, active processing can also use sentence making and the generation of associated words in activities, discussions and dramas (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). It is important that children make personal links to their own prior knowledge through

discussions and activities so as to make sustainable connections with new words (Stahl, 2005; Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

Learning about metalinguistic information

Because of the number of word meanings children need to learn, the fact that many words have multiple meanings and the fact that the meanings of many words can vary in different contexts, other avenues for learning vocabulary also need to be utilised (Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). For this reason, it is important that children be taught and encouraged to make intentional analyses of word meanings (Pressley, 2006). This allows children to gain meaning from words encountered incidentally in their reading and when being read to. Intentional analysis involves making an analysis about the meaning of a word using information from the text surrounding the word as well as by analysing words structurally, according to the word's internal components. This type of analysis provides readers with the ability to decode words and access their meaning with greater certainty, a skill that contributes significantly to their reading proficiency (Nicholson & Dymock, 2010). These are important skills, as acquiring vocabulary knowledge independently through reading will become a significant means by which learners will develop their vocabulary knowledge as they grow older (Cunningham, 2005).

Encountering words multiple times

Encountering words and information about words multiple times in a variety of ways is important because it provides learners with opportunities to develop decontextualised knowledge about words (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Brett et al., 1996; Elley, 1989; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; McKeown & Beck, 2006; McLeod & McDade, 2011; Penno et al., 2002). This knowledge and the experience of words in varied contexts helps build the learner's understanding about how words work in terms of their flexible semantic boundaries and how these can be influenced by their context (McKeown & Beck, 2006). Providing opportunities for multiple encounters with words can be challenging for teachers in the context of a full classroom programme. Regarding this issue, Stahl and Nagy (2006)

suggest that teachers realistically only treat selected words in an intensive manner (up to 12 encounters). This does not mean helping students a few times with other words is not beneficial as this may well support the development of a richer understanding of words as they are encountered incidentally in the future.

Although there is some debate about when children's capacity to acquire more sophisticated words begins to increase, many researchers believe that during their late preschool and early primary years children's literature becomes an important context in which children can encounter and acquire vocabulary that they are less likely to meet in everyday conversation with peers, siblings and parents (Coyne, Simmons, Kame'enui, & Stoolmiller, 2004; Kesler, 2010; Phillips & Lonigan, 2005). . Quality shared reading of children's literature has long been assumed to provide an important context for helping children to develop their general language skills and an understanding of the more sophisticated vocabulary that they will begin to encounter as their decoding skills begin to develop (Cunningham, 2005; Elley, 1989; Sénéchal, 1997; Sulzby & Teale, 1991).

Shared Reading Defined

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Holdaway (1982) studied the way the parents of accomplished emergent readers in a large New Zealand city conducted shared reading and facilitated language experience interactions that encouraged language development and literacy readiness in their pre-schoolers. Holdaway (1982) sought to develop a model of reading instruction that simulated this natural developmental learning for use in classrooms. The model was characterised by its goals which included that shared reading should be meaning and process centred rather than word centred, that it should provide a wide variety of literature experiences, and that it should encourage approximations about words in order to support the development of predictive and self-corrective decoding strategies derived from meanings in the text (Holdaway, 1982). In particular, it was hoped that this technique for modelling reading would enhance the

development of literacy readiness for children who lacked this when they started school. As part of the development of this practice Big Books were developed as a way of allowing teachers to model reading behaviours to groups.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education (2003) defines shared reading with Year 1–4 students as the interactive reading of texts where teachers lead the reading while the students listen to and follow the words visually as they are read. Shared reading involves the teacher modelling reading behaviour and scaffolding story readings with discussion about a range of text and language features to provide opportunities for children to develop reading and comprehension strategies, vocabulary knowledge and an appreciation of books in a supportive environment (Ministry of Education, 2003). Brown (2004) suggests that the essential features of shared reading include the following components: all participants looking at the same text, the teacher reading aloud while students follow, students are given support to understand the text and its meaning, that the teacher chooses an appropriate text and a purpose to meet the needs of the group, that the text is both challenging and supportive, and that the teacher and the students engage in discussions to work out the meaning of the text. The Ministry of Education (2003) suggests that shared reading should be an integral and regular part of a junior class reading programme (Ministry of Education, 2003). The Ministry of Education (2003) distinguishes shared reading as a different and separate activity from the 'reading to and talking with' approach to reading, which it characterises as the reading of books to individuals or small groups, with teachers engaging in comments and think-alouds about deeper features of the text that attempt to emulate the type of reading and interactions parents may engage in with one-to-one reading sessions. During reading-to and talking-with reading the text may or may not be displayed to children (Ministry of Education, 2003).

Fisher, Frey, and Lapp (2008) studied the behaviour of 25 expert teachers of Year 3–8 classes in the United States conducting shared reading. They found that these teachers always modelled fluent reading (sometimes

rehearsed beforehand), that the children could always see the text clearly, that the children were involved in responding to the text in a variety of ways and that the teachers modelled their own thinking about text out loud. They found that teachers focused modelling and discussion around a range of components of literacy, including comprehension, vocabulary, text structures and text features. These teachers tended to maintain a balanced focus across these four areas.

In an intervention study, Zevenbergen, Zevenbergen, and Whitehurst (2003) sought to investigate the effects a refined model of shared reading (called dialogic reading) had on young children's ability to evaluate narratives. The intervention was conducted with 123 four-year-old children from lower socio-economic homes in New York State in the United States. This intervention trained adults to engage in dialogue about stories while reading them to children. The study found that this type of reading had a positive effect on the ability of these children to evaluate narratives. Zevenbergen et al. (2003) suggest that this study indicates that dialogic reading can have a positive effect on the emergent literacy skills of young children before they begin formal reading instruction.

Similarly, in a meta-analysis of recent research, Lennox (2013) found that research indicates that shared reading sessions that were well-planned, that actively engaged children in interactive dialogue, that sought to expand on the content of texts and illustrated, and discussed key language and literacy features were an effective way of supporting the development of both the constrained and unconstrained language and literacy abilities that children need for learning.

For the purposes of this study, shared reading will be considered to be a teaching approach whereby teachers share books with children by 1) reading the text to children, 2) reading texts repeatedly over a number of sessions, 3) undertaking purposeful discussion before, during and/or after reading that aims to support the development of a range of language and literacy skills, and 4) displaying both the text and pictures for the children to view, follow and read during reading and discussions.

Supporting Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading

A literature search was conducted to find studies pertaining to how teachers went about supporting vocabulary development during shared reading in New Zealand. Key words and terms for this search included 'shared reading' and vocabulary New Zealand, 'shared reading' and 'vocabulary instruction' New Zealand, and 'vocabulary development' and 'shared reading' and 'teacher practice' New Zealand. Results from this search showed that several intervention studies had been carried out in New Zealand into the effects of reading stories to, and discussing words with children on their vocabulary development. (Elley, 1989; Nicholson & Whyte, 1992; Penno et al., 2002). However, no research to examine the current practices of classroom teachers in this area was apparent. From this search it seems apparent that there is a dearth of recent research in New Zealand concerning the ways teachers of junior classes go about supporting vocabulary development during shared reading. The following review of studies evaluates New Zealand and international research in this area. The above definition of shared reading incorporates aspects of reading to children where children can follow texts and view pictures, repeated reading of texts, interactions before, during and/or after reading, and the display of text and pictures for students to view. Although the literature pertaining to the efficacy of vocabulary support during shared reading reflects these components, not all the studies reviewed include all these components, as some studies are concerned primarily with investigating the effects of reading to students without instructional interactions. In order to review literature on the effects of all the components of shared reading, studies that contain a reading-to condition have been included to review the effects of this aspect of shared reading.

The following section reviews literature pertaining to 1) learning words incidentally by listening to stories, 2) the efficacy of repeated reading to support vocabulary development, 3) how interactions during shared reading may support vocabulary development, 4) different approaches to vocabulary support for different age groups during shared reading, and 5) targeting specific words to teach. A summary table of studies is included in

Appendix A. Research has indicated that the level of vocabulary knowledge of students may influence their propensity to acquire vocabulary and may influence instructional approaches (Nicholson & Whyte, 1992; Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Sénéchal, 1997). The following review of studies is structured to reflect the possibility that young learners at different levels of development may acquire vocabulary knowledge in different ways. The following categorisation for younger and older students is used: 1) younger learners: four- to six-year-olds and, 2) older junior learners: seven- to nine-year-olds. A review of literature pertaining to differentiating instructional approaches depending on the age and level of vocabulary knowledge of students follows sections 1–5 as outlined above.

Learning words incidentally by listening to stories

The New Zealand Ministry of Education (2003) encourages teachers to focus on fostering enjoyment and understanding of shared texts in the first reading and to focus on specific features of texts in subsequent readings. This provides children with an opportunity to acquire vocabulary incidentally during shared reading. Penno et al. (2002) suggest that incidental learning of word meanings from text context makes a significant contribution to growth in children's vocabularies primarily because reading, listening to and sharing texts are such a large part of most classroom programmes. Although this may be the case, learning words incidentally, without instructional support, may not be the optimal way to ensure new words are accurately secured in children's memories and are then available for easy retrieval and application for subsequent comprehension tasks. So what is the process by which young children learn vocabulary in context? Sénéchal et al. (1995) have proposed a model to illustrate how young children develop an understanding of new vocabulary and commit these understandings to memory. Sénéchal et al. (1995) suggest that children need to first establish and retain a phonological representation of a word, then narrow the search for potential word meanings by identifying and looking in relevant semantic, syntactic and pictorial contexts for clues to the meaning to help the search for synonyms (for known referents) or to support the inferential process (in the case of new words). After this,

children then need to choose or develop a meaning for the word that seems to match these context clues, connect this assumed meaning with the phonological representation of the word, and incorporate this into their existing vocabulary knowledge (Sénéchal et al., 1995). Later encounters with the word in alternative contexts can act to confirm and refine its meaning in relation to other words associated with it (Biemiller & Boote, 2006).

The process of incidental acquisition of words illustrated by Sénéchal et al. (1995) involves multiple steps and variables and as such may not be a reliable or effective way of acquiring new vocabulary for many children. Shared reading may provide a wealth of potential contexts for learning words incidentally in context, but how effective is this way of developing vocabulary?

Younger learners

Robbins and Ehri (1994) were concerned with assessing the effects of reading to children on the acquisition of target words. Robbins and Ehri (1994) read one story twice to 38 five- and six-year-old kindergarten children.¹ All the children were considered non-readers by their teachers. The children were read to without explanation of the target words. The participants were from a mix of middle and lower income families, all of them were native English speakers. The children were assessed to determine their receptive vocabulary ability using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), and then divided into three ability groups. All the groups received the same treatment. The subjects were read one of two randomly selected stories containing 11 unfamiliar target words. Each story was read twice. Target words were determined to be words that were considered to be unfamiliar to the participants by the following criteria: 1) synonym target words were substituted for actual words in the texts, 2) based on estimates of that, words were low-frequency words in children's literature, 3) evidence from vocabulary recognition tests on same-age kindergarten children, and 4) based on assessments of kindergarten

¹ In the United States kindergarten children are aged 4–5 years old

children's knowledge of the target words by eight kindergarten teachers. The target words occurred in the stories multiple times, some words occurring more often than others. Children engaged in some discussion about the story each time. The children were post-tested on the 11 words they heard in the story and 11 words from the story they had not heard.

Robbins and Ehri (1994) found a mean gain of 11% in understanding of the target words. The mix of target words in this study contained proportionally more verbs than adjectives and nouns and this may have affected the number of words learnt. This is consistent with Elley's (1989) 15% average gain for just reading conditions and adds to the evidence that reading of stories, without additional instruction, will contribute to some vocabulary development. Robbins and Ehri (1994) also speculated that if more words had occurred multiple times in the stories then more learning may have occurred. Robbins and Ehri (1994) were careful to ensure that the context of the target words gave good support for their meaning by testing adult's ability to identify substituted pseudo-words in the text contexts to be read. It was predicted that this would likely have supported better understanding but did not have a significant effect. However, as the authors note, they took particular care in this study to ensure that the context the target words were heard in provided good support for gaining meaning. This may have contributed to the level of incidental understandings gained. Robbins and Ehri (1994) note that many trade books read to children may not have such supportive contexts for sophisticated words.

McLeod and McDade (2011) investigated the effects of incidental word learning during shared reading. Their study was conducted with 30 three- and four-year-old children enrolled in early childhood centres in Columbia, South Carolina in the United States. Although this study included younger children than the current study, it provided useful evidence of the effects on incidental vocabulary learning through reading in young children. McLeod and McDade (2011) investigated the effects of reading to children on the children's ability to acquire novel words incidentally. McLeod and McDade (2011) defined incidental learning in terms of fast mapping,

whereby children acquire a working understanding of an unfamiliar word that is then filled out in subsequent encounters with the word to complete learning. The McLeod and McDade (2011) research included nonsense words in stories and then assessed children's knowledge of the word meanings (i.e. the researchers generated novel nonsense words that related to a set of illustrations, and then constructed a narrative to include these words). This condition was constructed in order to ensure that all the participants were exposed to the novel words the same number of times.

In the McLeod and McDade (2011) study, all the children (except one) were able to fast map unfamiliar words through hearing them in the context of the story read to them without attention being drawn to target words. McLeod and McDade (2011) also analysed the types of words the children learnt, noting that they were better able to fast map nouns than verbs incidentally. Participants learnt a mean of 1.55 nouns from five possible novel nouns and 1.15 verbs from five possible novel verbs after one reading (compared to 2.0 nouns and 1.3 verbs after three readings).

In the McLeod and McDade (2011) study, children were read to on a one-to-one basis. Before data was collected, researchers spent several hours (over several days) becoming familiar with the participants to allow for a rapport to be developed between the reader and the participant. The one-to-one setting especially makes it difficult to generalise results to a class/teacher reading situation where the level of engagement with the text and the sociolinguistic circumstances may vary considerably from student to student. Also, the interactions that happen between researchers and participants during the shared reading session may have affected the results. Although McLeod and McDade (2011) took care not to draw attention to the target words, it was noted that a certain amount of discussion of the text took place as part of the process of introducing and sharing the story and that these interactions may have added to the understanding of specific words (more so with repeated readings). It is, however, worth considering that all shared reading would necessarily involve some discussion before, after, and possibly during the reading, and therefore this may not be a major variable to consider with this study.

The use of bespoke nonsense novel words in the design of the McLeod and McDade (2011) study allowed the researchers to minimise possible cultural and language biases that may be present with natural words. This method has potential for investigating and comparing the vocabulary acquisition abilities of children from low and middle income homes by using truly novel words that are included in the contexts of stories.

Taken together, the Elley (1989), and Robbins and Ehri (1994) studies indicate that incidental learning of new vocabulary can occur by just listening to stories. The percentage of novel words acquired is, however, relatively modest (approximately 11–15%). This has implications for shared reading practice as an aspect of shared reading involves reading the story uninterrupted, although shared reading generally will involve substantial interaction and instruction (Ministry of Education, 2003). The intrinsic benefits of reading stories directly (and not digressing for additional specific instruction) may also have some benefit to word learning. By dedicating some shared reading time to discussion free reading teachers may enhance the aesthetic quality of the story and as a result may be able to better maintain the attention and engagement of young students.

The question of how well children learn words through incidental encounters is partly answered by the McLeod and McDade (2011) study which found that fast mapping was possible in children as young as three and four years old, by just listening to stories. However, richer understandings of word meanings may well vary depending on the existing vocabulary knowledge of individual learners (Nicholson & Whyte, 1992; Robbins & Ehri, 1994). Learning words independently from context requires children to have sufficient associated vocabulary knowledge with which to incorporate novel words (Sénéchal et al., 1995). It follows then that a richer vocabulary knowledge base facilitates a more secure knowledge of a word by providing a richer context of associations.

This suggests that although incidental learning can occur through the just listening component of shared reading, it may not provide opportunities for

children to secure quality understandings of new words, especially those with limited vocabularies. For this to occur, additional instructional procedures may be needed.

Older learners

Elley (1989) began looking at the role shared reading could play in vocabulary development over two decades ago. In two parallel studies, Elley (1989) assessed the vocabulary levels of 168 seven-year-olds and 127 eight-year-olds in Christchurch New Zealand (Elley, 1989). He used multiple-choice vocabulary pre- and post-testing of target words with an even mix of picture vocabulary items and synonyms to assess the acquisition of vocabulary from shared reading sessions. The target words were drawn from the shared stories. Two experiments were carried out. The first experiment, involving the seven-year-old group, involved teachers reading a text without explanation. The second experiment, involving the eight-year-old group, involved participating teachers conducting shared reading with six groups, three of which received no vocabulary explanation and three of which received explanation. Both groups were then read a second story with the same conditions. Elley's (1989) results showed that incidental listening to stories played a part in vocabulary development because across both interventions students made gains of 15% of the target words from listening to the story alone. Elley's (1989) study also indicated that the number of times a word occurred in the text was important in reinforcing understanding as was the degree to which the context and pictures helped facilitate understanding.

Of interest is the fact that one text read to the children produced significantly less new word understandings. Prompted by feedback from participating teachers, Elley (1989) speculated that this text may have been less engaging than the first. Elley (1989) did not attempt to analyse the vocabulary items used in the second text in terms of how the word meanings were supported within the story and by the associated pictures. Variations in these factors may also have contributed to lower levels of understanding in the second text.

This study supports the view that children can learn some new vocabulary incidentally from listening to shared reading without additional instructional support. Although the percentage of words learnt in this condition seems limited, it should be remembered that no additional instructional time was required to illicit this vocabulary development in the reading alone condition (over and above reading the story).

Repeated readings and their effect on learning new word meanings

A number of studies have included comparisons between multiple and single readings of texts to assess the effect of this condition on vocabulary development. The current study investigated shared reading that involved repeated reading texts over consecutive sessions; some of these readings involved reading uninterrupted through the text while others involved interactions and discussion before, during and after reading. Studies that have included a reading only condition are included here to assess the impact of repeated reading of texts on words that may not be specifically targeted by teachers.

Younger learners

Sénéchal (1997) included a single reading condition and repeated reading condition in her study. This research was conducted with 30 three- and four-year-olds from middle-income households in a kindergarten setting in Canada. In the repeated reading condition the children were read the story three times (twice in the first session and once the following day).

Sénéchal (1997) chose target words that she estimated would be novel words for the participants. Sénéchal (1997) was particularly interested in the different memory processes involved in vocabulary acquisition when children were involved in differentiated reading conditions. According to Sénéchal (1997), producing expressive vocabulary involves an additional cognitive process (than receptive vocabulary) because individuals need to access the phonological representation of the word in order to reproduce it. Sénéchal (1997) hypothesised that expressive vocabulary might be

more sensitive to conditions such as repeated reading because children are more often involved in opportunities to encode, associate and store new words. Sénéchal (1997) was interested to examine both receptive and expressive vocabulary acquisition. Participants were administered a receptive vocabulary test using multiple picture choices and also expressive vocabulary tests involving the naming of pictures of target vocabulary items. Sénéchal (1997) compared the vocabulary acquisition under single reading and repeated reading conditions. Results showed that both the participant's expressive and receptive vocabulary benefitted from repeated readings. Although there was no significant difference between expressive and receptive benefits, this research suggests that children benefit from repeated exposure to words in texts read to them. Repeated experiences with the text provided more opportunities for children to experience words in the context of the narrative and the associated illustrations, and to view and hear the word's phonological representation (Sénéchal, 1997). In the process, children are better able to refine and secure both new and known words in their memories in a more precise manner.

McLeod and McDade (2011) investigated the effects of repeated exposure of novel words in the context of stories with 30 three- and four- year-old children enrolled in early childhood centres in South Carolina in the United States. McLeod and McDade (2011) embedded novel words into a story. They compared vocabulary gains for children who were read a story once and those who were read the same story three times. In all the story reading sessions the researchers employed components of shared reading interaction, such as reading with expression, pausing to focus on specific aspects of the text and pointing to pictures, but did not draw attention to the target words in any way. Children participated in a post-test of target word meanings after either one or three readings depending on the condition group they were assigned to. McLeod and McDade (2011) then compared the mean number of target words learnt by the single reading group (1.55 nouns and 1.1 verbs) with the three readings group (2 nouns and 1.4 verbs). This showed that the novel word recognition increased after three readings. Although McLeod and McDade

(2011) speculate that increased time spent with the reader may have made some contribution to the children's ability to learn from later readings, the increased number of words learnt supports the theory that repeated readings are beneficial to vocabulary development.

Given the opportunity afforded by repeatedly hearing and seeing words in stories, the hypothesis that young children will better secure and refine new word meanings is supported by these studies. Certainly the results are an improvement on the single reading condition. However, these results need to be placed in the context of classroom programmes as a whole. It is possible that the time taken to provide opportunities to refine word meanings during repeated readings may be better used in other ways. The proportion of new words learnt over single readings is not significant when compared to spending the time repeating one story, with reading several new stories, and learning new words as a result. Having said this, a richer understanding of some words (from listening to one story several times) may be preferable to a rudimentary understanding of many words (from listening to several different stories). Having said this, this idea is not supported by Sénéchal's (1997) study which did not show a greater growth in expressive vocabulary as a result of repeated reading. This result indicates that the idea that repeated readings alone provide greater overall vocabulary growth needs to be treated with caution. Teachers need to be aware of the possibility of diminishing student engagement associated with repeated reading (Biemiller & Boote, 2006). Long term studies that used general (rather than target word) assessments of vocabulary would be required to make more certain conclusions about the benefits of repeated reading in classroom practice.

Mixed age

Biemiller and Boote (2006) looked at how multiple readings of a text might affect vocabulary acquisition across groups of different ages. Biemiller and Boote (2006) compared the word learning gains from two readings and four readings of a text to a group of 43 four- to six year-old children from low-income Canadian homes. As part of the same study, Biemiller and

Boote (2006) also read two times and four times to a group of 37 grade 1 and 32 grade 2 children.² The group had approximately 50% English language learners. Biemiller and Boote (2006) were interested in the effects of repeated readings on word learning. While they hypothesised that it was possible that the percentage of words learnt would increase with more readings of the text, Biemiller and Boote (2006) were also aware that children's interest and engagement in a text may diminish with multiple readings and this may in turn affect word learning percentages. Biemiller and Boote (2006) used the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test to establish match cohorts of participants. Participants were then pre- and post-tested for knowledge of target words from set texts using a set of words. Participants were read the target word in a sentence and then asked what the word meant in that sentence. This study included instructed and non-instructed words in the assessments of both two and four readings, and was therefore able to look at these conditions in relation to the number of readings.

Results of this intervention showed that across both instructed and non-instructed words Biemiller and Boote (2006) found that the kindergarten group gained an average of 6% more words after hearing the text read four times than two times, while the grade 1 group gained 7%. Additional readings clearly supported word learning for this group. The grade 2 group gained 5% more words from four readings than from two readings. For this group, for non-instructed words read four times, the percentage of word meanings gained actually dropped, indicating a possible drop in engagement with the text by this group.

Biemiller and Boote's (2006) study suggests that the kindergarten and grade 1 groups in this study benefitted from additional readings (four as opposed to two), whereas additional readings for the older students (grade 2) was negligible. Biemiller and Boote (2006) suggest that while younger children generally welcome repeated readings of texts, older children may

² In the United States and Canada grades correspond to the following ages:
 Grade 1 = 6-year-olds
 Grade 2 = 7-year-olds
 Grade 3 = 8-year-olds

find additional readings less appealing and may as a result be less attentive to successive exposures to words in texts.

The Biemiller and Boote (2006) participant groups included a significant amount of children who were (50%) learning English as a second language. These children could likely be considered to have low English vocabulary abilities compared to native English speakers. The participants in this study were also primarily from low income homes. This may also mean that as a group they could be considered to have low starting vocabulary levels compared to children from middle income families (Hart & Risley, 1995). This participant vocabulary profile is important as it may affect the effect of the type of instruction.

Kindergartners from middle income homes with a larger vocabulary and more experiences with books may respond to multiple readings more like the way the first graders in Biemiller and Boote's (2005) study did. This has implications for instruction. Further research into the vocabulary and age variables of different groups in relation to word learning from multiple shared readings may show that different instruction may be necessary for children from different income and language groups.

The effects of interactions between teachers and students during shared reading on vocabulary development

According to Pressley (2006), shared reading is at its most effective when it includes discussions between reader and listener about the meaning of the text. However, uninterrupted is also important to provide children with a cohesive experience of a text (Brown, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2003). Therefore teachers are faced with balancing instructional discussion with providing aesthetic experiences of shared texts. This also effects decisions about vocabulary instruction.

Younger learners

Beck and McKeown (2007) looked at the effects of introducing specific vocabulary instruction into shared reading sessions. This study was

carried out with 119 kindergarten and first grade children in a low performing elementary school in a low-income household neighbourhood in the United States. Eight teachers at the school received professional development to help them implement a vocabulary instruction programme that utilised shared reading. In this programme, teachers focused additional instruction on novel words considered sophisticated and of high utility that were included in the trade texts read to the children. As part of the instruction relating to the target vocabulary that framed the text reading, the teachers sought to reiterate for the children how the words were contextualised in the text, explain the meaning of the word, ask the children to repeat it, give examples of the word used in other contexts and illicit judgements and other examples of the word's use from the children. The teachers were also encouraged to reinforce the target word meanings on subsequent days. A set of trade books chosen for their strong storylines and high-quality language was provided for teachers to use over a 10 week period. A comparison group participated in daily shared reading but did not receive the related vocabulary instruction. Both groups were administered a receptive test of vocabulary (PPVT) to check for benchmark vocabulary levels prior to and after the intervention. The experimenter designed pre- and post-vocabulary tests that were developed around a set of 22 words for each group (kindergarten classes and grade 1 classes) that were drawn from the texts used in the study.

Beck and McKeown (2007) used the shared reading experience primarily as a spring board to provide a context in which teachers could introduce the target words and provide examples of how they may be used in context. Teachers were encouraged to revisit the target words in a variety of ways over a week following the reading. Follow-up aspects of the programme involved activities and interactions that included explanations, repetitions, questioning about the definition and generating examples of the target words in different contexts. This range of experiences was designed to give the participants a rich and multifaceted experience of the target words (Beck & McKeown, 2007). Teachers were encouraged to continue revisiting words for five days subsequent to reading the text. The study did not detail whether teachers conducted repeated readings of the

target texts. An estimate of the amount of time spent on each word was derived from the observation that each word received instruction on the first three days of instruction in the experiment one condition, and then a subsequent two days follow-up and three review occasions in the experiment two condition.

Results showed the mean increase in words was 5.58 words for the kindergartners (as opposed to 1.04 for the non-instructed group). For the grade 1 group the mean gain was 3.64 words with the comparison group gaining 1.71. The Beck and McKeown (2007) study showed that more instruction and encounters with words increases understandings of them. However, Beck and McKeown (2007) discuss the intensive instruction required to achieve these gains indicates that sound vocabulary knowledge may not be easily acquired and that it may require significant instruction to secure word meanings.

Sénéchal (1997) included single-reading, repeated reading and questioning conditions in an experiment to determine the vocabulary gains made by 30 three-year-old and 30 four-year-old children from middle class homes in Ottawa, Canada during shared reading. Two versions of a multiple choice vocabulary assessment (using a Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test format) of target words chosen from the texts were administered before and after reading to assess both expressive and receptive vocabulary gains. The children were read the texts in a one-to-one context. These researchers found that interactions from children, such as pointing to pictures and eliciting labelling responses, resulted in gains in vocabulary knowledge in comparison to passive listening.

Sénéchal (1997) also looked at the effects of questioning during story reading on vocabulary development. In the interaction condition of the study children were asked 'what or where' questions regarding action in the text immediately after the relevant passage had been read. If the children responded with the correct label the reading continued. If the target word was not included in the response the researcher referred to the text and again elicited a response. If still no response was given the

researcher labelled the word. Sénéchal (1997) found vocabulary gains were 3.7 times superior in the questioning condition to that of the repeated reading condition. The key finding in Sénéchal's (1997) research regarding interactions lies in the confirmation that labelling questions during reading can have a significant positive effect on the acquisition of expressive vocabulary. The children in this study were more likely to produce words they had spoken than those they had not in the post test (Sénéchal, 1997). This finding supports the hypothesis that retrieval practice enhances expressive vocabulary (Sénéchal, 1997). Regarding receptive vocabulary, these children were able to comprehend comparatively similar amounts of novel words regardless of whether they had spoken them or only heard them. This finding indicates that retrieval practice is not necessary to secure receptive comprehension of new words (Sénéchal, 1997).

The effect of different types of questioning about vocabulary were investigated by Walsh and Blewitt (2006). Walsh and Blewitt (2006) conducted a study of 35 three-year-olds from middle and upper SES households in Philadelphia, United States. Although younger than the participants in the current study, the Walsh and Blewitt (2006) research provides a useful insight into the effects of questioning during shared reading regarding vocabulary on young children. Participants were administered the PPVT and the New Word Comprehension Test (which tested students ability to say nine target words from the texts used in the intervention) before and after reading. Children were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions: vocabulary eliciting questions, non-eliciting questions, and no-questions (control group). Walsh and Blewitt (2006) examined the difference of asking questions that included novel words (non-eliciting) and questions that elicited the novel words (eliciting) had on vocabulary acquisition. These authors also investigated the use of concrete and perceptually based questions. This study found that although all the children's receptive and expressive vocabulary benefitted from questioning (more than the group that were not asked questions during reading), there was no distinction between children who were asked non-eliciting and those asked eliciting questions (Walsh & Blewitt, 2006).

Walsh and Rose (2013) studied the effects of different types of questioning in interactions with children with low vocabulary levels who it was thought may benefit from hearing novel words in questions rather than being asked to retrieve them unaided. Walsh and Rose (2013) investigated the effect of specific types of questioning during shared book reading on the vocabulary development of a group of 45 pre-schoolers from low-income households in the United States. The children were an average age of 4 years 3 months old. Walsh and Rose (2013) asked one group of children non-eliciting vocabulary questions (i.e. they included the novel word in the question, usually using illustrations to support the process) and a second group eliciting vocabulary questions (questions that sought to elicit the novel word from the children) during reading. These researchers found that the children who were asked non-eliciting questions (that included the novel word) were more likely to have higher levels of receptive vocabulary after the test than those who were asked questions that sought to elicit the novel word and a control group who were asked no questions during reading. These results are different to Walsh and Blewitt's (2006) study of middle-class children where there was no difference found between questioning styles. The authors speculate that non-eliciting vocabulary questions and comments provide additional exposure to novel words which in turn supports vocabulary development. Further, they suggest that this style of questioning may be particularly appropriate to children from lower socio-economic backgrounds who have had less exposure to novel words. Eliciting styles of vocabulary questioning places a high demand on children's linguistic abilities and may actually impede comprehension for some children by distracting attention away from the reading (Walsh & Rose, 2013). These authors suggest that this type of low-demand questioning may allow children to link the novel label and the referent in ways that allow them access to meaning that they may not achieve otherwise. This type of approach also allows students with less oral and print vocabulary experience to acquire vocabulary and the processes of vocabulary acquisition more gradually.

Older learners

To assess the effects of additional vocabulary instruction during shared reading, Elley (1989) added an explanation condition to his early comparative study of the effects of shared reading on vocabulary development (conducted with a group of seven-year-olds). This study was conducted with 127 eight-year-old children in six classes from a cross-section of New Zealand schools. Three class teachers were instructed to explain the target words during reading using a mix of synonymous phrases, role-play or picture clues. A control group of three classes received no explanations during reading. Both groups heard the story read three times over seven days. Students were pre- and post- tested using a 36 item multi-choice test of difficult words from the two stories used in the study (a control test of five additional words was included). The results of this study showed impressive gains in understanding of the target vocabulary for those children who received explanations as part of the shared reading sessions (39.9% compared to 14.8% for the group who received no instruction). This showed that explanations of difficult vocabulary given during reading contributed to more than double the understanding of novel words than in the just reading condition (Elley, 1989). This suggests that significant additional vocabulary explanation may be justified in the context of shared reading sessions.

There are some distinctive features of Elley's (1989) study that need to be considered when making assumptions about the implications for teaching practice. Students who participated in the study were relatively old (eight years). At this age, if many of the group are reading at or near their age level they are beginning to encounter words in their reading that are more sophisticated and as such are becoming more practised at using context clues to understand new words (Nicholson & Whyte, 1992; Stanovich, 1986). They are also more likely than younger children to have a level of vocabulary and a breadth of experience with more sophisticated words which is greater than that of younger children. Research has shown that greater levels of vocabulary development are beneficial to word learning (Nicholson & Whyte, 1992).

Brett et al. (1996) also included an explanation condition in their study of the vocabulary effects of three conditions: having no exposure to the target words, listening to target words being read in a story, and listening to target words with an explanation about them during reading. These authors undertook a study of 175 fourth grade pupils from six classrooms in two urban schools in Florida, United States from a mixture of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Brett et al. (1996) developed and administered a 25 word multi-choice pre- and post-vocabulary assessment of unfamiliar words drawn from two children's stories that were used in the study. They found that including explanations of target words alongside reading resulted in significantly more vocabulary gains than reading without explanations, and a control group that did not listen to the stories or have explanations. These vocabulary gains were also sustained when post-tested after six weeks. This study provides further evidence that explanations of vocabulary as part of shared reading sessions are an effective way for older children to learn vocabulary. It should be noted, however, that this study did not measure how often words were encountered in each story or the degree in which target words were discussed by teachers during reading.

Mixed age

The studies reviewed below included groups of both younger (four to six year-olds) and older (six to seven year-olds) students and looked at a variety of interaction conditions. This allowed for across age comparisons in relation to interaction conditions to be made. Because of this these studies are presented in this section as a whole.

Biemiller and Boote (2006) found that children were able to learn significantly more target vocabulary when explanations of words were included during reading than when just listening to stories. These authors conducted an intervention with 43 kindergarten, 37 grade 1 children, and 32 grade 2 children from a Canadian working class community. At each grade, two classes were involved and two teachers read stories to their

groups. This study tested various conditions for learning vocabulary over two experiments. These authors were concerned about how pre-testing vocabulary prior to an intervention might artificially inflate the evidence of children's word learning by sensitising children to the target words prior to the intervention. These researchers pre-tested matched cohorts of participants on different sets of target words, then post-tested all the groups on the same words and compared the results. By doing this they were able to account for any prior learning of target words that may have occurred during pre-testing. The first intervention in this study showed significant gains when explanations were included with repeated readings (an average gain of 10% across age levels). The gains for kindergarten and grade 1 children were similar. A second study introduced more intensive word instruction alongside book readings. A five day sequence was developed for each story and researchers added additional components to learning words which included learning more target words, reviewing words throughout the week and reviewing words in a different context from that in the story. The average gains from this enhanced condition were 41% of word meanings, a very encouraging result when compared to other studies. This enhanced intervention required teachers to commit significant time to additional vocabulary instruction over and above the shared reading itself, and involved additional reviews and experiences of target words outside the context of the text. This showed that additional intensive instruction about words in the context of shared reading supports new word learning for younger children (five- to six-year-olds), but that the vocabulary instruction to get these gains required was intensive.

Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) extended understanding of the effects of interactions in shared reading by comparing three styles of reading: just reading, performance reading, and interactional reading. This study also used a mix of narrative and informational texts and looked at the vocabulary learning outcomes for different genres. The stories were read to 15 groups of 12 students randomly selected from grade 1 and grade 3 students from five schools in the South Eastern United States. The performance condition consisted of discussion and questioning

related to target vocabulary before and after reading. The interactional condition involved these interactions occurring during reading. Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) found that the performance condition facilitated greater gains than just reading and the interactional condition produced the greatest gains across all age groups, including the older group that had more experience reading and listening to stories (although the effect sizes were less for the older group as they knew more words in the pre-tests). These results parallel and support Elley's (1989) conclusions that interactions about word meanings as part of shared reading are an effective way of encouraging vocabulary development. They extend these findings by distinguishing between interactions before and after reading, and interactions during reading. This study supports the hypothesis that interactions that happen in close proximity to the context of a word in the story are the most effective way of securing understanding. There was no significant difference in vocabulary acquisition between instructional narratives and fictional texts.

The Beck and McKeown (2007), Biemiller and Boote (2006), Brett et al. (1996), Elley (1989), Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002), Sénéchal (1997), Walsh and Blewitt (2006), Walsh and Rose (2013) studies show that interactions about novel words during reading are an effective way of supporting the development of understanding of these words and that interactions are more effective than just reading or repeated reading. This finding suggests that teachers should be seeking to include interactions about specific vocabulary as a part of their shared reading lessons, and that interactions are most effective when they take place in relation to the context in which words appear in text.

Differentiating instructional approaches depending on the age and level of vocabulary knowledge of students

Research has shown a correlation between different levels of early vocabulary knowledge and later reading ability (Catts, Fey, Zhang, & Tomblin, 1999; Catts & Kamhi, 2005; Nation, Cocksey, Taylor, & Bishop, 2010; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Hart and Risley's (1995) research indicated a significant correlation between socio-economic status and

vocabulary knowledge in young children. In recent years, New Zealand has shown a widening distribution of scores on PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, 2011) (i.e. a significant gap between a group that is doing well at reading and a group that is not doing well) (Tunmer et al., 2008). There is concern amongst New Zealand educators about the increasing gap in literacy achievement between children attending lower decile rated schools and others (Tunmer et al., 2008). Because of the relationships between early vocabulary knowledge and later reading ability on the one hand, and socio-economic circumstances and vocabulary knowledge on the other, it is important to examine how well children from lower socio-economic households and those with low levels of vocabulary knowledge are acquiring vocabulary during shared reading.

Robbins and Ehri (1994) sought to delineate the differences between the vocabulary gains made by 51 kindergarten children with varying levels of vocabulary knowledge during shared reading from middle to lower class homes. Participants were pre-tested on a receptive vocabulary test (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised) and then divided into three ability groups made up of poor, average and high vocabulary knowledge. The groups were each read one of two stories without explanation. The results showed that participants with higher PPVT standard scores gained more words than those with lower scores on the post-test of general vocabulary. Robbins and Ehri (1994) also found that the gains made from just listening for all groups was generally moderate. They speculated that better results may be gained for children with lower levels of vocabulary if teachers engaged in greater amounts of interaction during reading sessions. Robbins and Ehri's (1994) study supports the hypothesis that the greater the vocabulary level of young children, the more able they are to learn new vocabulary and suggests that more interaction may support better vocabulary learning. This supports the idea that interactive vocabulary support for young children during shared reading may help prevent those children with less vocabulary level from falling behind their more able peers.

In a similar study, Nicholson and Whyte (1992) compared the vocabulary gains made by children who were more able readers to those who were less able to see if better readers were more proficient at learning novel words from listening to stories. A total of 57 of eight-, nine- and ten-year-old students were selected and divided into three groups of below average, average and above average reading ability. In this study students were interviewed individually and assessed for their knowledge of 10 target words. They were then read a story once with the target words in it. The children were then post-tested for knowledge of the 10 target words. Like Robbins and Ehri (1994), Nicholson and Whyte (1992) found that better readers made greater vocabulary gains than poor readers after listening to the story. Nicholson and Whyte (1992) speculate that instructional vocabulary support for poorer readers, alongside reading, may better help them to help them to better organise and remember new vocabulary.

Sénéchal et al. (1995) conducted two experiments to look at the issue of individual differences in vocabulary development levels and how this may effect vocabulary acquisition during read stories (Sénéchal & Cornell, 1993). Sénéchal et al. (1995) assessed the vocabulary levels of a group of 60 four- and five-year-olds using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R) receptive vocabulary test. Participants were classified as either high or low in word knowledge. Information was also collected on the socio-economic status of the children. In the first experiment, 32 children were included in one of two shared reading conditions: condition 1) listening to stories passively, and condition 2) listening to stories and pointing to pictures and naming (labelling) novel word items. In the second experiment, 48 children were read to. Two books were read in each experiment. The second experiment included a third condition where children were asked to point to (but not label) pictures of the target words. A tailored comprehension vocabulary post-test with a similar format to the PPVT-R (using pictures of target words alongside three alternative illustrations) was constructed and administered for the target words relating to each book read. Contrary to predictions, these experiments did not find significant correlations between vocabulary knowledge and the

effects of the reading condition. Instead they found that all the participants benefitted from retrieval practice (whereby children are required to access word knowledge from their memory and express this in some manner) in conjunction with listening to stories as opposed to passive listening. There was no significant difference between the two conditions pointing to pictures and labelling. The authors hypothesise that the retrieval mechanisms used by young children may become more efficient as they get older which may result in greater differences between children with low and high vocabulary after six years of age (Sénéchal et al., 1995). Results suggest that interactive vocabulary instruction during shared reading would benefit young children with less vocabulary knowledge by helping them develop and practice using cognitive mechanisms that would help them learn words more easily in the future.

Nicholson and Whyte (1992), Robbins and Ehri (1994), and Sénéchal et al. (1995) indicate that the level of vocabulary knowledge for young children may influence their propensity to acquire additional word knowledge. Those who have greater word knowledge also have a greater ability to gain more. This indicates, as Nicholson and Whyte (1992) suggest, that the Matthew effect (Stanovich, 1986) begins to show in children's language and literacy outcomes early in their development. The Matthew effect was suggested by Stanovich (1986) as a way of describing the phenomena whereby children who have higher levels of literacy and language ability at a young age tend to develop literacy skills at an exponentially greater rate than those with less ability, resulting in an ever increasing gap in ability between these groups as they progress through their schooling. It may be that teachers need to consider different approaches to supporting vocabulary development depending on the level of vocabulary ability of their students. For instance, Walsh and Rose (2013) found that children from a Head Start kindergarten³ benefitted more from non-eliciting questions whereas middle-class children from an earlier study showed no additional benefit from either questioning style (Walsh &

³ Head Start kindergartens in the United States receive additional funding due to the low socio-economic status of their communities and so their rolls are considered to be primarily made up of children from families of lower socio-economic status.

Blewitt, 2006). This suggests that teachers may need to differentiate interactional approaches (e.g., types of questions) when reading to children from different home backgrounds and with varying levels of vocabulary knowledge, and include more interactive instruction and practice for those with less vocabulary knowledge.

Targeting specific words for further instruction during shared reading

There is some debate about the number of words children need to know at various stages of their language and literacy development, and how vocabulary should be estimated. Defining the criteria for vocabulary needs to consider the construction of words. For instance, should we include words with all their affixes or simply root words, in a count of vocabulary size? According to Biemiller (2005), derived words will generally provide sufficient information about the meaning of a word in context, if partnered with knowledge of additional word parts, such as affixes and compounds. Using this criteria, Biemiller (2005) estimates that the average number of word meanings (root words) a typical four-year-old knows are about 3400, increasing to about 5,000–7,000 by age six (Biemiller, 2005).

Biemiller (2005) advocates learning words in sequence by focusing instruction on words that are partially known by students, as these will be the words most rapidly understood. Biemiller (2005) suggests that as a general guide, partially known words for a kindergarten or new entrant child will likely be those that are well known to a grade 2 average child, rather than words being learnt by children in grade 5.

Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2005) have also proposed a three tier hierarchy of word categories to use for selecting words for further instruction. These authors suggest choosing what they call tier two words for instruction, using the following principles: a) choose words that are more sophisticated than basic conversational vocabulary, b) choose words that have general utility (as compared to tier three words which often have specialist applications), and 3) choose words which relate to concepts students are already familiar with and can explain the meaning of using

words they already know. These authors maintain that learning tier two words adds precision to students' understanding and expressions of these concepts. Beck et al. (2005) suggest further refinement of target words from specific contexts requires teachers to assess the utility of words in relation to the textual or instructional context that are being used.

Teachers can do this by assessing which words make the most important contribution to the meaning of the discourse as a whole.

Summary

In New Zealand, Tunmer et al. (2008) have noted a persistent gap between a majority of children who are achieving good reading skills and a minority group who are struggling to learn to read. The Simple View of Reading suggests that reading comprehension is a product of decoding and language comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). Good readers synchronise language comprehension and decoding skill to facilitate good reading comprehension (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2004; Tunmer & Chapman, 2012; Ziegler & Goswami, 2005). For poor readers a weakness in one area can affect performance in another. An understanding of the meanings of most words in a passage is essential in order to gain reasonable comprehension (Duke et al., 2011; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Nicholson & Dymock, 2010; Pressley, 2006). Knowledge of the meanings of individual words also contributes to decoding ability and fluency (Perfetti et al., 2005; Tunmer & Chapman, 2012). Vocabulary knowledge makes distinctive contribution to both decoding and language comprehension (Tunmer & Chapman, 2012).

A significant group of children enter school with low levels of vocabulary knowledge (Hart & Risley, 1995). Hart and Risley's (1995) research indicates that children from lower-socio economic homes tend to have lower levels of vocabulary knowledge than those from middle income homes. Research carried out by Nicholson and Whyte (1992), Robbins and Ehri (1994), and Sénéchal et al. (1995) indicates that children's propensity to acquire vocabulary may be affected by the level of their vocabulary knowledge and that those with less vocabulary knowledge may

acquire vocabulary at a slower rate. This suggests that support for vocabulary development is particularly important for children struggling in this area as early as possible.

Acquiring vocabulary knowledge is a complex process that involves establishing the relationships between concepts, and organising and refining ideas about words (Beck & McKeown, 1991). Vocabulary development happens best when new vocabulary is experienced by learners in a variety of ways, including as part of definitional information, by acquiring context information, by actively processing words, by acquiring and processing metalinguistic information and by having multiple exposures to words (Beck & McKeown, 2007; McKeown & Beck, 2006; Stahl, 2005; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

For young children, listening to, looking at, and sharing in the reading of literature becomes an important source of vocabulary knowledge when they begin school (Coyne et al., 2004; Kesler, 2010; Phillips & Lonigan, 2005). Shared reading is an interactive instructional context whereby teachers model fluent reading by reading stories to children (and in doing so provide an aesthetic experience of texts), and involve children in discussion and responses to texts in ways that encourage the children's development of skills and understandings related to reading, including comprehension skills, vocabulary knowledge, word reading, text conventions and text features (Brown, 2004; Fisher et al., 2008; Ministry of Education, 2003; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003).

The New Zealand Ministry of Education (2003) encourages teachers to read stories uninterrupted as part of regular shared reading and to read stories repeatedly. Elley (1989); McLeod and McDade (2011), and Robbins and Ehri (1994) found 11–15 % incidental vocabulary knowledge gains for children when read to without additional explanation. McKeown and Beck (2006) suggest that having multiple exposures to words is an important way that children can secure word meanings. Biemiller and Boote's (2006), McLeod and McDade's (2011), and Sénéchal's (1997) investigations of repeated reading of texts to enhance word meanings

produced mixed results, suggesting that encountering words in text through hearing them read (once or multiple times) without additional interactions, may have some value.

Interactions are a key component of shared reading (Fisher et al., 2008; Ministry of Education, 2003; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003). Beck and McKeown (2007), Biemiller and Boote (2006), Brett et al. (1996), Elley (1989), Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002), Sénéchal (1997), Walsh and Blewitt (2006), and Walsh and Rose (2013) indicate that interactions about words are an effective way of supporting vocabulary development. Effective interactions may include using such strategies as providing explanations, facilitating repeated exposure to words, questioning about definitions and encouraging students to generate examples of the target words in different contexts (Beck & McKeown, 2007; Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Brett et al., 1996; Elley, 1989; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Sénéchal, 1997; Walsh & Rose, 2013).

Rationale for Study

There is a persistent gap between students who acquire good reading skills and those that struggle to learn to read confidently in New Zealand schools (Tunmer et al., 2008). Vocabulary knowledge plays a key role in supporting both decoding and language comprehension, which in turn contributes to reading comprehension (Tunmer & Chapman, 2012). A significant minority of children, who tend to be from lower-socio economic homes, reach school age with low levels of vocabulary knowledge in comparison to the majority of their peers (Hart & Risley, 1995). Acquiring vocabulary is a complex process that happens best when a number of avenues are made available to learn words (Beck & McKeown, 1991). Listening to and discussing texts is an instructional context that lends itself well to this process (Coyne et al., 2004; Kesler, 2010; Phillips & Lonigan, 2005). Listening to words in stories and discussing the words can have positive effects on learning new words, and there are a range of avenues to learning word meanings and methods of instruction that teachers can utilise to support vocabulary development (Beck & McKeown, 2007;

Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Brett et al., 1996; Elley, 1989; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Sénéchal, 1997; Walsh & Rose, 2013).

The New Zealand Ministry of Education (2003) advises junior class teachers to include shared reading as a core component of their reading programme. Listening to stories and discussing features of texts (including vocabulary) are both components of the Ministry's advice for conducting shared reading (Ministry of Education, 2003).

While there are a number of international studies that explore best practice for supporting vocabulary development while reading to children, there is a dearth of research regarding how exemplary teachers support the development of vocabulary knowledge of junior primary school students in low decile schools in New Zealand.

The current study therefore seeks to examine how exemplary teachers of junior classes in lower decile New Zealand schools go about supporting the vocabulary development of their students during shared reading sessions. Specifically this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the characteristics of the shared reading practice of exemplary teachers of junior classes in low decile schools that support vocabulary development during shared reading?
- 2) What avenues for learning words do these teachers utilise and, what instructional methods to support vocabulary development do these teachers use during shared reading?
- 3) What distinctions are there between the characteristics of shared reading practice and the instructional methods utilised by teachers of younger junior classes and those of older junior classes in relation to supporting vocabulary development during shared reading?

The following chapter will outline the methodology used to answer these questions.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

The following chapter outlines the methods used and procedures followed in this study. Included are an outline of the rationale of the methodology, the settings and the procedures followed to select participants, information about the participants and procedures for the analysis of data. This is followed by a summary.

Methodology Rationale

This section outlines the rationale behind the design of the study and decisions about the methodology utilised.

This study aims to gain an understanding of what exemplary teachers of junior classes in low decile schools are doing to support the development of vocabulary knowledge of their students during shared reading, and an understanding of their perceptions about effective vocabulary teaching during shared reading.

This study employed a qualitative approach to data gathering and analysis. Qualitative research can involve utilising a variety of empirical methods to describe and interpret social situations in order to gain a better understanding of them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). This study used observations, semi-structured interviews and brief questionnaires to gather data. To describe and interpret data this study utilised Grounded Theory methods. Grounded Theory was developed as a method for interpreting complex social phenomena, such as those found in modern school classrooms (Charmaz, 2013). Grounded Theory seeks to develop and use organised inductive guidelines to gather and analyse data and build intermediate theories to describe and explain the data (Charmaz, 2013). Researchers using Grounded Theory may gather data and undertake initial analysis of data concurrently using comparative procedures and a methodical and inductive approach to their investigation (Charmaz, 2013).

Research reviewed prior to designing this study indicated that shared reading may be an effective context for supporting the development of vocabulary knowledge and that the way that teachers conducted shared reading and supported the development of vocabulary knowledge during shared reading could have an effect on student's vocabulary development (Beck & McKeown, 2007; Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Brett et al., 1996; Elley, 1989; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Sénéchal, 1997; Walsh & Blewitt, 2006; Walsh & Rose, 2013). The focus of this study is shared reading. Prior to undertaking data collection, the researcher undertook a review of recent Ministry of Education publications (Ministry of Education, 2003) regarding shared reading, as well as preliminary conversations with teachers of junior classes (not in the present study) and engaged in preliminary observations of shared reading and a review of books used by teachers in shared reading sessions. These discussions and observations as well as the review of literature led to a decision to use the term 'shared reading' when approaching schools and teachers for the study. Also, from this preliminary process of inquiry, observations and audio recordings of shared reading sessions were decided upon as the best way of gathering information in the first instance for the following reasons: 1) Discussions with teachers and preliminary observations indicated that shared reading sessions were generally conducted in a setting with temporal, physical and participant boundaries (the sessions were limited to one session per day, usually as part of a limited (3–5) series of sessions using a single text and held in the classroom with the teacher's class), this would enable a bounded observation and recording of each session to be obtained (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2006), 2) Observations and audio recordings would collect essential data relating to teacher's talk about vocabulary during shared reading and the conduct of the shared reading session. A questionnaire and semi-structured interviews would provide additional data regarding the teachers and their perceptions about their shared reading practice.

A descriptive research methodology using observations, interviews and a questionnaire was used because the aim of the study was to identify and

describe patterns of teacher's instructional discussion and activities, and their perceptions about effective instruction intended to support the development of vocabulary knowledge of students during shared reading (Lodico et al., 2006). A multi-participant study design was chosen because of the bounded nature of the settings and to provide the opportunity for cross-participant comparative analysis (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). Semi-structured interviews and a brief questionnaire were employed to provide insights into participant's perceptions about instructional methods and to provide information to triangulate information gathered during observations (Lodico et al., 2006).

Settings and Participants

This section provides an overview of the participants included in this study, including information about how they were selected, the settings they were observed in and details of the participant's professional profiles.

Selecting setting and participants

Because of the literature showing that children from lower socio-economic households tend to have lower levels of vocabulary knowledge, I was interested in examining exemplary teachers' practice in lower decile rated schools in order to gain a picture of how these teachers meet the vocabulary development needs of their students (Hart & Risley, 1995). The review of literature showed that effective teachers may need to differentiate instruction for children with low levels of vocabulary knowledge from those with a more established vocabulary knowledge (Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Sénéchal et al., 1995). For this reason the present study sought to select participants from a range of year levels in junior schools. To identify exemplary teachers for the study, the following process was undertaken.

In the first instance, the researcher approached and sought the guidance of the Primary Teaching Practice Coordinator (PTPC) in the Faculty of Education. The PTPC's role is to liaise with schools to coordinate the placement of trainee teachers for the teaching experience component of

their course. The PTPC has an overview of local schools and a relationship with senior staff in these schools. The researcher asked the PTPC to recommend several decile1–4 schools that he considered had exemplary literacy practice.

The PTPC recommended three local schools that met the criteria. The study required two schools. The two schools selected to be approached in the first instance were chosen due to their larger size, which would allow for greater principal latitude in recommending teachers. After the initial approach, one of these schools was unable to participate as the observations coincided with the school undergoing a standard Ministry of Education review process; therefore the third school was contacted. The initial approach to schools was as follows: The principals of the selected schools were contacted by letter (Appendix B) and sent information sheets (Appendix C) explaining the research. This correspondence was followed up by a phone call. During this phone call the researcher briefly explained the research to the principals and made an appointment to discuss the research project further. During the subsequent appointment the researcher explained the research in more detail and answered questions. Invitation letters, information sheets and consent forms were then sent to the Boards of Trustees (Appendices D, E and F). After both principals and the Board of Trustees gave their consent to be part of the study, principals were asked to recommend two teachers in the junior school whom they considered to be exemplary teachers of literacy.

Each nominated teacher was sent letters containing an invitation to participate in the study (Appendix G), a Teacher Information Sheet (Appendix H), and a Teacher Consent form (Appendix I). This correspondence was then followed up by phone to teachers at their schools, in the first instance. During this phone call I reiterated that they have been nominated by their principals as exemplary teachers of literacy and arranged a meeting to answer their questions and obtain consent to participate. Teachers were informed that the purpose of the study was to describe how teachers went about conducting shared reading.

As discussed, one of the first schools approached was unable to take part. An approach to a third school was therefore made. After the approach was made to the third school principal and board, two teachers were recommended and gave their consent to participate in the study. The study was then able to proceed.

Participating Teachers

This section describes the participating teachers. For a summary of qualifications and experience refer to Table 1.

Teacher One teaches a Year 0 (new entrants) class. Teacher One is a fully registered teacher. She has been a primary school teacher for 11 years. She taught Year 5 and 6 students for four and a half years and Year 8 students for two years. She has taught Year 1 and 2 students for three and a half years. Teacher One is currently undertaking Reading Recovery training which she started at the beginning of 2013. She teaches Reading Recovery for two hours each morning. The remainder of her day is spent teaching the Year 0 class.

Teacher Two teaches a Year 1 class. Teacher Two has completed a Bachelor of Social Science with Honours (first class), a Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language, and has a PhD in Sociology. She has completed two in-school professional development courses in literacy learning in recent years and is a fully registered teacher. She has been teaching primary children for a total of eight years. She taught for six years, then took a break for five years. She then returned to teaching as a relief teacher for one year. She is now in her second year full-time after returning to the profession. She has taught Year 1 students (her current level) since the start of this year.

Teacher Three teaches a Year 3 and 4 class. Teacher Three completed a Bachelor of Social Science and a Bachelor of Teaching before beginning teaching. Teacher Three has been involved in a literacy professional development programme for 18 months that incorporated professional

learning concerning writing and exploring language. This professional development has had a significant emphasis on supporting vocabulary development within literacy. She also completed a one year writing professional development programme two years ago. Teacher Three is a fully registered teacher and has been teaching for six years. She taught a Year 1 and 2 class for three years before teaching a Year 2 and 3 class. She has taught Year 3 and 4 this year.

Teacher Four teaches a Year 2 and 3 class. Teacher Four has a Bachelor of Teaching Degree and is a fully registered teacher. She has been teaching for 20 years. Over this time she has taught classes throughout the primary school level range but has had most of her experience in junior classes. She taught Year 5–8 classes mainly part-time. She has been teaching Year 2–3–4 classes for the last 11 years. Teacher Four is an experienced Reading Recovery teacher. At the time of observations she was teaching Reading Recovery each morning between 9am and 10.30am and teaching the Year 2–3 class for the remainder of the day. Teacher Four provides leadership for reading professional development within the school.

Table 1: Summary of Tutor's Qualifications and Experience

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Class Level</i>	<i>Qualifications</i>	<i>Teacher Registration</i>	<i>Teaching Experience</i>
1	0–1	Bachelor of Science Diploma of Teaching Reading Recovery Training 2013	Fully registered	11 years
2	1	Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) Diploma Teaching English as a Second Language PhD (Sociology)	Fully registered	8 years
3	2–3	Bachelor of Social Science Bachelor of Teaching	Fully registered	6 years
4	3–4	Bachelor of Teaching	Fully registered	20 years

Description of Schools and Classes

Note on decile ratings

Decile ratings provide a mechanism which the New Zealand Ministry of Education uses to allocate funds to schools (Ministry of Education, 2013). A decile rating provides information about the socio-economic circumstances of families in the community from which a school draws its students. Deciles are set out in 10 sections. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the largest proportion of pupils from low-socio economic circumstances. Decile 10 schools are those with the lowest proportion of students from low socio-economic homes.

Description of School A

School A is a rated as a decile 4 school (Education Counts, 2014). School A is an inner city primary school in a large urban centre. It is located in a mixed commercial/residential area. Students come from a variety of local communities, some catching the school bus from neighbouring suburbs. It is a contributing primary school (Years 1–6). The school was established over 100 years ago and classrooms are housed in refurbished historic buildings. The school normally maintains a stable roll of 310–320. However, at the time of observations the roll was expanding and had reached 350. This was an unusual increase. The school is made up of fairly even numbers of boys and girls (45% girls, 55% boys).

School A's student population is made up of students from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. This diversity is a well-established part of the schools make-up and is acknowledged as a significant part of its character. The roll includes students from families from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds (see Table 2).

Table 2: School A: Roll by Ethnicity – Term 3 2013

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>School roll (percentage)</i>
NZ / European Origin	35
NZ Maori	31.8
Polynesian	9.5
Asian	7.8
Indian	7.2
Middle East	2.3
African / African Origins	4.9
Latin American	1.7

Teacher One and Teacher Two's classes are part of the junior syndicate of School A, made up of seven classes from Year 0 to Year 3. The senior syndicate has four classes of Year 4–6 students.

Teacher One's class

Teacher One's class was made up of children who have been at school between one week and eleven months. At the time of observations she had 20 children in her class. Reading levels in the group ranged from Reading Recovery level 1 (5–5.5 age level) to Reading Recovery level 16 (5–5.5 age level). Several new children arrived during the period observations were being conducted. During observations, the class reached capacity for a new entrant class and shortly after the numbers were reduced to 14. There was one child who spoke English as a second language in the class during the observation period. The class had three children with additional learning needs: one with speech and hearing difficulties and two with behavioural difficulties.

Teacher One's classroom has a standard mobile teaching station and wall mounted whiteboard. It has a permanent digital projector and wall-mounted screen. Teacher One has both a laptop computer and an iPad to use for teaching. The classroom has tables for children to work at and a mat area.

Teacher One conducted all her shared reading sessions with the whole class seated on the mat. She used the mobile whiteboard as a stand for books and a flip chart and also wrote words on the whiteboard itself.

Teacher Two's class

Teacher Two's class was made up of students who had been at school for at least one year (6–7 years old). At the time of observations she had 22 children in her class. Reading levels in the group ranged from Reading Recovery level 1 (5–5.5 age level) to Reading Recovery level 14 (5.5–6 age level). She had three children who spoke English as their second language. She had no children with significant special needs in her room.

The classroom has a standard mobile teaching station and wall mounted whiteboard. It has a permanent digital projector and wall-mounted screen. Teacher Two has both a laptop computer and an iPad to use for teaching. The classroom has tables for children to work at and a mat area.

Teacher Two conducted all her shared reading sessions with the whole class seated on the mat. She used the mobile whiteboard as a stand for books and used a pointer to direct attention to words and illustrations. She used her laptop computer and the digital projector to display images related to the stories on the screen adjacent to the mat area.

Description of School B

School B is rated as a decile 2 school (Education Counts, 2014). School B is a suburban primary school. It is located beside a main highway adjacent to a low socio-economic residential area. It is a contributing primary school (years 1–6). The school had a roll of 206 at the time of observations. The roll is subject to significant roll fluctuations meaning teachers may have to contend with students coming and going during the year. The school is divided roughly into two syndicates both with five classes. Teacher Three and Teacher Four's classes are part of the junior syndicate.

The school also has partial Maori immersion (bilingual) classes (*He iti Pounamo*) that include Year 1–2, Year 3–4 and Year 5–6 students.

The school has a large percentage of Maori students and a significant group of Pasifika students (see Table 3).

Table 3: School B: Roll by Ethnicity – Term 3 2013

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>School roll (percentage)</i>
NZ / European	8
Maori	66
Polynesian	11
Asian	6
Indian	3
Middle East	4

Teacher Three and Teacher Four's classes are part of the junior syndicate of School B made up of students from years 1–4.

Teacher Three's class

Teacher Three's class was made up of students who have been at school at least four years. At the time of observations she had 16 children in her class. Teacher Three had recently had her class divided in two due to the level of need in the group, leaving her with 16 students. Reading levels in the group ranged from Reading Recovery level 14 (5.5–6 age level) to Reading Recovery level 24 (8–8.5 age level). The group had seven children with English as their second language. Fifty-five percent of the group were assessed as being below the national standard in reading.

The classroom has a standard mobile teaching station and wall mounted whiteboard. It has a permanent digital projector and wall-mounted screen. Teacher Three has a laptop computer to use for teaching. The classroom has tables for children to work at and a mat area.

Teacher Three conducted all her shared reading session with the group sitting on the mat. She tended to hold the poem she was reading and read it aloud to the children. She conducted discussions with the children on the mat.

Teacher Four's class

Teacher Four's class was made up of students who have been at school at least four years. At the time of observations she had 14 children in her class. Teacher Four taught part-time in the class, teaching Reading Recovery for the remainder of her time. She had recently taken over teaching the group that had been part of a larger class divided in two. Reading levels in the group ranged from Reading Recovery level 9 (5.5–6 age level) to Reading Recovery level 23 (8–8.5 age level). The group had two children with English as their second language. Five of the group were assessed as being well below the national standard in reading and writing.

The classroom has a mobile teaching station with a whiteboard and mounted screen to display digital images. Teacher Four has a laptop computer to use for teaching. The classroom has tables for children to work at and a mat area.

Teacher Four conducted all her shared reading sessions with the whole class seated on the mat. She used the mobile whiteboard as a stand for books and used a pointer to direct attention to words and illustrations. At times she read to the students with the book on her lap. She used her laptop computer and the digital screen to display images related to the stories.

Procedure

This section describes the procedure followed for gathering data for a descriptive research case study using direct observations, interviews and questionnaires to gather data. Qualitative analysis is used to describe and compare the results.

The purpose of this research is to describe the instructional practices of four exemplary teachers of junior classes in low decile schools in relation to supporting vocabulary during shared reading sessions.

Data Collection Procedures

Observations

Observer conduct during observations

Classrooms are complex social settings with a range of interactions occurring between teachers and students, and students and their peers. For the purposes of this research the researcher maintained the position of non-participant observer. To ensure the researcher did not participate or affect the lesson in any way they maintained an observation position apart from the teacher and the class group (usually at the back of the classroom) and employed a number of strategies to minimise interactions which included minimising greetings with students, avoiding eye contact and referring students to the class teacher if they sought guidance from the researcher (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Maintaining focus on the purpose of the observation was essential in order to minimise the need to filter extraneous data during data analysis.

Observations of shared reading sessions

Teachers were asked to indicate when they conducted shared reading. It was left up to teachers to decide what they considered shared reading to be (Reese, Cox, Harte, & McAnally, 2003). All the teachers indicated one part of the day when they conducted a shared reading session. The researcher arranged to visit the class to observe at this time. The researcher only observed and recorded the shared reading session itself.

A small digital audio recorder (Olympus VN – 2100PC Digital Voice Recorder) was used to record the teacher's speech during observations. This was placed as close to the teacher as possible during the shared reading sessions and as unobtrusively as possible. Teachers were asked to wear a small lapel microphone that they clipped onto themselves. This meant the recorder was usually sited on the ledge of the teaching station which all the teachers used.

During interviews, the audio recorder was placed discretely at the edge of the table equidistant between the interviewer and the interviewee. The lapel microphone was not used. During transcription of observations only the teacher's speech was transcribed. If children commented, the response was recorded as a response only. Observation and interview recordings were transcribed shortly after being recorded. All questions and answers were transcribed for the interviews. During observations, the researcher made note of any gestures or dramatic devices, words written on whiteboards or charts, pictures or diagrams drawn or images displayed by the teachers. Any drama or gestural actions elicited from the children were also noted.

The data from observations presented and discussed in this study was gathered during the participating teacher's regular shared reading sessions. Teachers were asked to carry out shared reading as they normally would. Only the instructional component of the shared reading session was observed and recorded. Follow-up activities were not observed or recorded. The researcher intended to capture the series of sessions involving each book or poem title. Teachers indicated that the instructional component of each series usually ran for four days with a follow-up activity planned for a fifth day. The follow-up session was generally not observed. In the case of teacher absence during a week of observations, the remaining session in the series was observed and recorded. If a teacher was away for the majority of the series, an additional series was observed, but the original sessions remained as part of the data.

Table 4: Table of Observations

School	Teacher	Year level	Number of sessions	Session	Duration (minutes)
A	1	1	9	1	16.58
				2	18.05
				3	22.52
				4	17.5
				5	16.09
				6	19.07
				7	23.29
				8	26.25
				9	18.41
Total minutes observed T.1					177.76
A	2	0-1	7	1	21.39
				2	14.45
				3	15.09
				4	13.07
				5	10.33
				6	21.09
				7	15.39
Total minutes observed T.2					110.81
B	3	2-3	8	1	9.23
				2	12.03
				3	12.49
				4	25.27
				5	9.37
				6	9.08
				7	11.46
				8	10.47
Total minutes observed T.3					99.4
B	4	3-4	6	1	6.47
				2	5.5
				3	6.03
				4	7.57
				5	7.42
				6	10.52
Total minutes observed T.4					43.51
Total Sessions			30	Total minutes	431.48

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participating teachers. Semi-structured interviews are designed to provide a structure that gives parameters to a discussion while providing enough flexibility to allow for the interviewer to enquire further into specific areas if the progress of the interview gives the opportunity to do that (Lodico et al., 2006). Interviews were conducted with all four teachers once observations had been completed and transcribed. The transcripts were made available to the teachers.

The interview questions were designed to follow a format that progressed from very broad to more specific. Interview questions were derived from the transcripts and observational notes and with reference to the research questions, and research regarding teaching strategies related to shared reading and vocabulary development. An interview guideline was prepared and used to provide a guide for interviews as follows; however, questions for individual teachers meant that this format varied from teacher to teacher.

Table 5: Summary of Questions Asked During Interviews

Questions
I'm primarily interested in the way you support vocabulary development during shared reading sessions. Can you tell me a bit about how you go about teaching vocabulary to your students during shared reading?
How do you go about selecting words to teach?
Do you teach before, during or after reading, or a combination?
Do you always specifically deal with vocabulary during shared reading? Why/why not?
How do you go about choosing reading material for shared reading? Are you happy with the available resources?
Do you feel shared reading is an effective place to introduce new vocabulary? Why/why not?
Are there other times in the day you teach vocabulary? What are these?
How does shared reading rate as a place to teach vocabulary compared to other contexts?
What types of resources would help you with vocabulary teaching shared reading?

Questionnaires

Questionnaires (Appendix J) were developed to gather information for teacher and class profiles and the shared reading programme. The questionnaire sought information across three areas:

- 1) class profile – (numbers, reading age range, students with additional needs),
- 2) shared reading programme – (frequency, duration)
- 3) the teacher's professional profile

Questionnaires were supplied to teachers at the beginning of observations and collected as they completed them.

Process of Data Analysis

Observation data

An analysis of the teacher's instructional conversation and actions during shared reading was carried out. As the focus of the current study was on teachers' support of vocabulary development, this study made a distinction between three instructional areas: vocabulary related teacher talk, non-vocabulary related teacher talk, and reading text. Non-vocabulary instructional teacher talk during shared reading was defined following criteria from the Ministry of Education publications on shared reading (Ministry of Education, 2003) as instruction related to the following areas: thinking critically about texts (inferences, plot predictions, setting, characters), phonological patterns (onset/rime, phoneme, syllables, suffix, prefix, base words), letter/sound relationships, book terminology (title, author, cover), punctuation, print conventions, visual information (font styles, speech bubbles etc).

Initially, vocabulary related teacher talk was defined as any teacher-talk that related to the following areas: definitional information, information about the context of a word (related to its meaning), questions eliciting information from students about the meaning of a word, and instruction and discussion about the metalinguistic features of a word (Beck & McKeown, 2007; McKeown & Beck, 2006; Stahl, 2005; Stahl & Fairbanks,

1986; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). These are outlined in Table 6. Reading of the text was noted as a separate component of the session.

Table 6: Initial Teacher Talk Categories

<i>Non-vocabulary teacher talk</i>	<i>Student management</i>	<i>Vocabulary related teacher talk</i>	<i>Reading text</i>
Thinking critically about texts (inferences, plot predictions, setting, characters)	Behaviour Management	Information or discussion about the context of a word (related to its meaning)	
Phonological patterns (onset/rime, phoneme, syllables, suffix, prefix, base words)	Praise	Questions eliciting information from students about the meaning of a word	
Letter/sound relationships		Definitional information about words	
Book terminology (title, author, cover)		Information or questions about the meta-linguistic features of a word	
Punctuation			
Print conventions			
Visual information (font styles, speech bubbles etc)			

Note: From Beck and McKeown (2007), McKeown and Beck (2006), Ministry of Education (2003), Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) and Stahl and Nagy (2006).

Analysis of Teacher Instruction Related to Supporting Vocabulary Development

While undertaking observations, the researcher sought to identify and note specific aspects of teacher instruction that contributed to supporting vocabulary development. Schunk (2008) suggests that although there are a number of ways that instructional methods can be defined, a framework for viewing instruction may include looking at the way learning material is organised and presented, the way opportunities for practise are facilitated, and how feedback and reviews of learning are facilitated. For the purposes of this study an instructional method was considered to be ways that teachers organised, presented, gave feedback about and facilitated practice and reviews of learning material to support their students' vocabulary development during shared reading. The initial criteria for instruction that contributed to vocabulary development were informed by Stahl and Nagy's (2006) framework for vocabulary acquisition, which suggests children acquire new words best when they are exposed to and experience them in the following ways: 1) as part of definitional information, 2) in relation to relevant contextual information about words, 3) when they engage in active processing about words, 4) when they receive and discuss metalinguistic information about words, and 5) when children are exposed to words multiple times (Beck & McKeown, 2007; McKeown & Beck, 2006; Stahl, 2005; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

In the first instance, observations of teachers conducting shared reading were undertaken. After each observation, field notes were reviewed and initial codes generated. As more teachers were observed, using a process of constant comparison, the researcher began to identify commonalities between the different teachers' uses of vocabulary support methods. As a result of this process, codes for vocabulary support related instruction were refined and consolidated. After observations were completed, a sample observation transcript from each teacher was coded using the codes that had emerged from field notes during observations. These were reviewed and related back to the categories for vocabulary acquisition to check that all of them could relate to one category or another. At this point

an additional code was added to account for the provision of associated words.

Description of Codes Developed for Analysis of Observed Shared Reading Session Transcripts

Using the process described above, codes were developed to describe teachers talk pertaining to supporting vocabulary development during shared reading. These are described in Table 7.

Table 7: Descriptions of Codes Developed for Analysis of Vocabulary Support During Observed Shared Reading Sessions

<i>Vocabulary acquisition processes</i>	<i>Teachers' instructional methods</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Example</i>
Acquire definitional information	Provides an explanation using gesture and/or drama	Teacher uses gestures or drama to convey explanation	Teacher 3 used a sweeping arm gesture to add information about the word 'whisk'. "Right I'm going to say it again and look at my hand movement that might help you understand" (Teacher 3, Session 1).
	Explanation using images in the text	Teacher points to images in the text and provides a label	Teacher points to images in the text and provides a label. "It is, that's close, it does sound a bit like a barrel, excuse me, it's, they call it a hay bale" (Teacher 1, Session 1).
	Provides an explanation using images not in the text	Teacher shows additional image not in the text and provides a label	Teacher uses google images to show pictures of goats and goat's wool (Teacher 2, Session 8).
	Provides explanation using materials	Teacher shows and facilitates experiences with materials to provide an explanation	Teacher 2 showed student some raw wool to add definitional information about a goat's coat (Teacher 2, Session 8).
	Refines word meaning	Teacher refines an explanation offered by a student so as to provide a more comprehensive and accurate definition	In response to a student providing the word 'sneaky' in relation to a fox Teacher 3 says: "He's a sneaky fox and he probably wants to go and steal and eat the chickens doesn't he?" (Teacher 3, Session 3).
	Provides an explanation using personal experience	Teacher tells a personal anecdote to explain a word	Teacher 2 talked about her experience with wallabies to help describe a kangaroo (Teacher 2, Session 1).
	Provides a dictionary definition	Teacher reads definition directly from a dictionary	My definition says: Commotion: a violent disturbance, agitation, upheaval (Teacher 3, Session 5).

<i>Vocabulary acquisition processes</i>	<i>Teachers' instructional methods</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Example</i>
Acquire context information	Associates words with other words	Associated words in a number of contexts including: 1) as part of definitions, 2) in response to student explanations and as part of vocabulary questions, 3) to extend the connection with other words and build concepts	E.g For cackles: “Yeah a little bit like the word snigger; we did the word snigger yesterday; snigger is similar, normally a witch cackles so normally we put the word witch and cackles together” (Teacher 3, Session 2).
	Recasts word in a new sentence. E.g: For commotion:	Teacher includes the word in a sentence not the same as that in the text	“There was a <i>commotion</i> at the house and the police officers went to go and have a look” (Teacher 3, Session 5).
	Re-reads the word in the text	Teacher re-reads a sentence from the text with the target word in it	For ‘bib’: “That white thing. Yes, that white thing. I’m just going to go quickly back to our poem. That white thing. Look at what they called it. R- ‘White bibs, tucked into coats of shining black” (Teacher 3, Session 6).
Engage in active processing	Asks a non-eliciting question	Teacher asks a question that elicits an explanation about a word and includes the target word in the question	“If I were to whisk away, what would that be?” (Teacher 3, Session 1).
	Asks an eliciting question	Teacher asks a question that elicits an explanation, but does not include the target word in the question	“Have a look at the cover on this book. What’s the creature on the cover?” (Teacher 2, Session 2).
	Elicits word use drama	Teacher elicits a drama to act out a word	“Ok right. Let’s have a look. Who can show me swaying?” (Teacher 3, Session 6).
Acquire metalinguistic information	Discusses metalinguistic information	Teacher provides and/or discusses metalinguistic information about a word	For stealthily: “It’s an adverb, and it is a really good word. Stealthily through the grass. It means really carefully” (Teacher 4, Session 6).

Note: From Beck and McKeown (2007), McKeown and Beck (2006), Stahl and Fairbanks (1986), Stahl (2005) and Stahl and Nagy (2006).

Note: Associated words were used in a variety of contexts, including as part of definitions, to refine a word meaning and to extend the connection of a target word with other associated words that were not always synonyms or antonyms. To provide recognition of the degree of use of associated words as an instructional method for the purposes of this study it was decided to consider the provision of associated words as an instructional method that contributed to building context information.

Inter-Rater Reliability

An inter-rater reliability test was undertaken to assess the reliability of the coding of teachers' vocabulary support (see Table 7). A sample of two sets of observed shared reading session transcripts was randomly selected from the study. Each sample set consisted of two consecutive shared reading sessions (Teacher 1, Sessions 2–3 and Teacher 3, Sessions 3–4). A retired teacher with 35 years teaching experience in New Zealand primary schools (with 20 years in junior classes) was asked to act as an independent rater. The researcher modelled the coding process using the first sample set of transcripts and the coding descriptions as a guide (Table 7). The rater was then asked to independently rate the second sample. Table 7 was provided as a guide. The inter-rater correlation between the coded transcripts used in the study and those rated by the independent rater was 75.6%. This correlation is relatively low. It was noted that the frequency of some codes was very low (1 or 2 instances per sample) and that slight discrepancies in the coding of these codes led to low correlations with them that contributed disproportionately to the overall correlation. Because of this it is possible that rating and correlating a larger sample would result in a higher correlation than that reported here.

Analysis of Additional Aspects of Vocabulary Related Teacher Talk

Additional aspects of teacher practice that were not considered instructional methods but still considered to have an effect on vocabulary development were considered separately. These aspects of teacher practice included the provision of multiple exposures to texts, choice of texts for shared reading and the timing of vocabulary instruction (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; McKeown & Beck, 2006). The proportion of vocabulary related instruction/reading/non-vocabulary related instruction was also analysed.

Analysis of Proportion of Teacher Instruction Related to Supporting Vocabulary

Based on the criteria for vocabulary and non-vocabulary teacher instruction (Ministry of Education, 2003) (see Table 6), an analysis of the proportion of instructional talk related to vocabulary that teachers engaged in was undertaken. It was established during initial observations that there were often no substantial uninterrupted passages of vocabulary instruction during shared reading, but rather that specific instruction was often interspersed with other instruction as well as text reading. This meant it may be difficult to establish clear temporal boundaries around varying instructional categories. Therefore to analyse the proportion of teacher time related vocabulary support in relation to different types of teacher instruction and reading during shared reading, a word count analysis was undertaken. Teachers' instructional talks were allocated to the following categories: non-vocabulary instructional teacher talk, vocabulary related teacher talk, and reading text (N.B All teachers engaged in some student management to settle and organise students, and praised children during instruction). Extensive instances of student management generally came at the beginning and end of shared reading sessions and were not transcribed. (Incidental praise and minor management was included as part of the instance of instruction that it was associated with). Student responses were not transcribed but were included in the total time for each session. Student responses were generally single word or short sentence replies. For the purposes of estimating the proportion of time spent on vocabulary instruction it was assumed that student responses related to the adjacent teacher question. A random sample from a shared reading series was drawn for each teacher. For each series word counts were made for each category of teacher talk. These were then compared and proportional percentages allocated. These proportions were then related to the total time for each series of shared reading sessions to give instructional proportions in time.

The timing of vocabulary related teacher talk in relation to reading of the text was categorised as before reading, during reading or after reading.

The texts teachers choose to read to children during the shared sessions were also noted.

The review of literature showed that effective teachers may need to differentiate instruction for children with low levels of vocabulary knowledge from those with a more established vocabulary knowledge (Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Sénéchal et al., 1995). Therefore for the purposes of this study, observation data is presented as younger students (Years 1–2) and older students (Years 3–4), as well as presented by individual teachers.

Analysis of Interviews

Interviews were undertaken to investigate the stated beliefs of teachers about vocabulary instruction and its role in shared reading. The questions were designed to augment and complement data gained from observations. Interviewees' responses were classified to reflect the following criteria: 1) instructional methods used to support vocabulary during shared reading, 2) efficacy of shared reading as a context for vocabulary support, and 3) vocabulary support in other contexts.

Analysis of Questionnaires

Data from questionnaires was used to describe each class group and to provide a profile of the participants' teaching experience and training. Information about shared reading within the class programme was used to complement observation data.

Summary

This study was conducted in four classrooms in two different low decile primary schools in an urban centre in New Zealand. In the first instance the researcher sought the guidance of the Primary Teaching Practice Coordinator at the local University's Faculty of Education to identify primary schools in the area that exemplified good literacy practice. Once schools had been identified their principals were approached and asked to

recommend teachers of junior classes that they considered to be exemplary teachers of literacy. These teachers were then approached and asked to participate in the study. Teachers were asked to conduct their shared reading sessions as they normally would. Teachers completed a brief questionnaire providing information about themselves and their class and participated in a semi-structured interview.

The classes observed fell into two age brackets: Years 0–1 and Years 2–4. The reading level of the students in these classes ranged from Reading Recovery level 1 to emerald Reading Recovery levels 24.

All teachers were observed conducting their regular shared reading sessions. A total of 30 shared reading sessions were recorded and observed with the four teachers. The average shared reading session was 23 minutes in duration (a total of 7 hours 1 minute). Four semi-structured teacher interviews were conducted to complement the observations. Teachers also completed a questionnaire to provide information about their class, their shared reading programme and their professional experience.

Data from questionnaires was collated to inform descriptions of participants and settings.

Analysis of the observation data was carried out in the following manner:

- a) transcripts of shared reading sessions were analysed to separate vocabulary related teacher talk from non-vocabulary related teacher talk, and reading texts, b) an analysis of the proportion of teacher talk devoted to vocabulary support during the shared reading session was undertaken, c) an analysis of the timing of teacher talk related to vocabulary knowledge in relation to reading the text was conducted, d) codes to describe aspects of vocabulary related teacher instruction were developed during observations initially in relation to research on vocabulary acquisition and then refined using a process of constant comparison across observations of the four teachers in the study, e) coded teacher instructional strategies were related to vocabulary acquisition categories,

and f) observation data was grouped to form two age related case-groupings: year level 0–1 (age 5-6) and year level 2–4 (age 7-8-9).

Teachers' responses during interviews were classified according to the following categories: 1) instructional methods used to support vocabulary during shared reading, 2) efficacy of shared reading as a context for vocabulary support, and 3) vocabulary support in other contexts.

Chapter 4 – Results

This chapter presents the data obtained in the current study to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the characteristics of the shared reading practice of exemplary teachers of junior classes in low decile schools that support vocabulary development during shared reading?
- 2) What avenues for learning words do these teachers utilise and, what instructional methods to support vocabulary development do these teachers use during shared reading?
- 3) What distinctions are there between the characteristics of shared reading practice and the instructional methods utilised by teachers of younger junior classes and those of older junior classes in relation to supporting vocabulary development during shared reading?

The data used in this study was obtained by observing four class teachers of junior classes at two separate urban schools in New Zealand while they were conducting shared reading sessions with their classes. In addition, data was collected from semi-structured interviews conducted with each participating teacher and from questionnaires completed by each teacher. The chapter is organised into three sections.

Section 1 presents data pertaining to the characteristics of exemplary teacher's shared reading practice that support vocabulary development during shared reading and includes a summary of teachers' responses to a questionnaire, a summary of reading material used by teachers to conduct shared reading, an overview of the way they structure their shared reading in relation to these texts, data related to the proportion of teacher instruction dedicated to supporting vocabulary development during shared reading, the provision of multiple exposures to words and teachers' timing of explanations in relation to reading texts (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; McKeown & Beck, 2006).

Section 2 presents data pertaining to the avenues teachers utilised to facilitate learning vocabulary and the instructional methods teachers used to support vocabulary development during shared reading. Results for each participating teacher are presented individually. In this section data pertaining to instructional methods is presented in the context of four categories of vocabulary acquisition presented in Table 7. The four learning categories are as follows: 1) acquiring definitional information, 2) acquiring context information about vocabulary, 3) engaging in active processing of vocabulary, and 4) acquiring metalinguistic information (Beck & McKeown, 2008; Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Brett et al., 1996; Nicholson & Dymock, 2010; Pressley, 2006; Stahl, 2005; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Stahl & Nagy, 2006; Walsh & Blewitt, 2006).

Section 3 presents data pertaining to the distinctions between the instructional methods utilised by teachers of younger junior classes and those of older junior classes in relation to supporting vocabulary development during shared reading.

Data from interviews is imbedded with the observation data to provide triangulation and expansion of observation data.

Questionnaire Data

Prior to the observation phase of this study, the participating teachers completed a questionnaire to provide information about their school profile, their class profile, their professional qualifications and experience, and initial information about the frequency and duration of their shared reading programme. This information was used to guide planning for observations as well as information about the setting of the research. Teacher, school and class profile information obtained from questionnaires was provided in the research setting section of Chapter 3. This information is summarised again below. Class profile information about each class is then restated briefly in Section 2 of this chapter at the beginning of each teacher's segment.

At the time of observations, School A had a roll of 343 students and School B a roll of 200. The classes of the teacher in the study ranged in size at the time of observations from 14 to 22. All the classes had several children with English as their second language. Three of the four classes had students with significant special needs. All the teachers stated that they conducted some form of shared reading daily. All the teachers in the current study were fully registered and all had graduate degrees, with one having a PhD (not in education). All the teachers were experienced teachers with the average years of teaching experience being 11.5 years with a range of 6–20 years. The range of teaching experience at the current level was 9 months to 11 years. Only one of the teachers had attended recent professional development that had provided information about vocabulary teaching strategies.

Section 1: Characteristics of Exemplary Teachers' Shared Reading Practice That Supported Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading

Shared reading practices

For the purposes of this research, a shared reading series refers to a sequence of shared reading sessions where the same text is read and discussed and a shared reading *session* refers to one occasion in a series where a teacher undertakes reading and discussion about a text. If a teacher only read and discussed a text on only one occasion, this is referred to as a shared reading series consisting of one session.

Table 8 provides an overview of the number of observed shared reading series, the associated sessions and the related texts read by teachers in this study. All the teachers in the current study conducted a series of shared reading sessions where a single text was read and discussed multiple times. The average number of sessions per text was three and the mode was four. All teachers conducted multiple sessions with all texts apart from Teacher Two, series 1 (one session, due to illness) and Teacher Four, series 2 and 3 (one session for each text). The average

length of a shared reading series (with a single text) was 43.4 minutes and the average length of a session was 13.5 minutes.

Table 8: Summary of Teachers' Shared Reading Durations and Texts Used

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Series number</i>	<i>Text title</i>	<i>Number of sessions</i>	<i>Total minutes per series</i>	<i>Average minutes per session</i>
1	1	Wishy-Washy Mouse	4	64.2	16
	2	Wishy-Washy Mirror	3	46.8	15
2	1	Rabbit and Rooster's Ride	1	16.4	16.4
	2	Bubble Trouble!	4	87.1	21.7
	3	Little Goat's Coat	4	73.6	18.4
3	1	Sea Witches	4	59	14.7
	2	Tui Returning to the City	4	40.6	10.1
4	1	Three Billy Goats Gruff	4	31.5	7.8
	2	Bridges	1	7.5	7.5
	3	Catmouflage	1	7.4	7.4
Totals series 10		Total sessions 30			
Average minutes			43.4		13.5

Table 9 illustrates that teachers shared a range of text types. Teacher One and Teacher Two both used conventional narrative Big Books. Both these teachers indicated that they selected texts following a school scheme that allocated a set of levelled Big Books to each year level. Teacher Two indicated that she liked to choose books that came in series as the children could build up prior knowledge of characters and settings.

Teacher Two also indicated that prior knowledge was important in book selection. She chose one of her books because of its spring setting related to the class topic. Teacher Three selected and shared poems that were not in a Big Book format. She indicated in her interview that she may choose an article, a Big Book or a poem to share. Of these she said she preferred to use poems because the vocabulary was richer than that of Big Books. Teacher Four used a narrative, poem and a non-fiction Big Book. She also indicated that choosing texts that the children could relate to and engage in was a priority.

Table 9: Text Types Used by Teachers to Conduct Shared Reading

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Text title</i>	<i>Author/Illustrator</i>	<i>Text type</i>
1	Wishy-Washy Mouse	Joy Cowley / Philip Webb	Narrative
	Wishy-Washy Mirror	Joy Cowley / Philip Webb	Narrative
2	Rabbit and Rooster's Ride	Jill Eggleton / Clive Taylor	Narrative
	Bubble Trouble!	Jill Eggleton / Clive Taylor	Narrative
	Little Goat's Coat	Jo Windsor / Trevor Pye	Narrative
3	Sea Witches	Ann McDonald	Poetic
	Tui Returning to the City	David Chadwick	Poetic
4	Three Billy Goats Gruff	Victoria St John	Narrative
	Bridges	Victoria St John / Jan Chilwell / Janet Kring	Non-Fiction
	Catmouflage	Judith Woodham	Poetic

Proportion of vocabulary related instruction/reading/non-vocabulary related instruction

This section presents data pertaining to the proportion of teacher instruction dedicated to supporting vocabulary development. Based on the criteria established for vocabulary and non-vocabulary teacher instruction (see Table 7), an analysis of the proportion of instructional talk related to vocabulary that teachers engaged in was undertaken (Ministry of Education, 2003). Series that included four sessions were randomly selected from each teacher to create a sample so as to provide consistency across all the teachers in the study. Series selected were: T 1:

series 1, T 2: series 2, T 3: series 1, T 4: series 1. The results of this analysis are presented in Tables 10–13.

Table 10 illustrates the proportion of teacher instruction committed to supporting vocabulary development during series 1 of Teacher One’s observed shared reading sessions. During this series, Teacher One committed 37% of instructional discussion to supporting vocabulary development, 9% to reading the text and 55% to non-vocabulary instruction.

Table 10: Proportion of Vocabulary Related Instruction/Reading/Non-Vocabulary Related Instruction: Teacher One, Series 1

Category	Series 1 (4 sessions) number of words	Percentage
Reading text – Wishy-Washy Mouse	561	9%
Vocabulary instruction	2342	37%
Non-vocabulary instruction	3484	54%
Total Instructional words	6387	

Table 11 illustrates the proportion of teacher instruction committed to supporting vocabulary development during series 2 of Teacher Two’s observed shared reading sessions. During this series, Teacher Two committed 9% of instructional discussion to supporting vocabulary development, 11% to reading the text and 80% to non-vocabulary instruction.

Table 11: Proportion of Vocabulary Related Instruction/Reading/Non-Vocabulary Related Instruction: Teacher Two, Series 2

Category	Series 2 (4 sessions) number of words	Percentage
Reading text – Bubble Trouble!	461	11%
Vocabulary instruction	369	9%
Non-vocabulary instruction	3346	80%
Total instructional words	4176	

Table 12 illustrates the proportion of teacher instruction committed to supporting vocabulary development during series 1 of Teacher Three's observed shared reading sessions. During this series, Teacher Three committed 85% of instructional discussion to supporting vocabulary development, 3% to reading the text and 12% to non-vocabulary instruction.

Table 12: Proportion of Vocabulary Related Instruction/Reading/Non-Vocabulary Related Instruction: Teacher Three, Series 1

Category	Series 1 (4 sessions) number of words	Percentage
Reading text – Sea Witches	191	3%
Vocabulary instruction	5278	85%
Non-vocabulary instruction	731	12%
Total instructional words	6200	

Table 13 illustrates the proportion of teacher instruction committed to supporting vocabulary development during series 1 of Teacher Four's observed shared reading sessions. During this series, Teacher Four committed 28% of instructional discussion to supporting vocabulary development, 21% to reading the text and 51% to non-vocabulary instruction.

Table 13: Proportion of Vocabulary Related Instruction/Reading/Non-Vocabulary Related Instruction: Teacher Four, Series 1

Category	Series 1 (4 sessions) number of words	Percentage
Reading text – Three Billy Goats Gruff	472	21%
Vocabulary instruction	637	28%
Non-vocabulary instruction	1153	51%
Total instructional words	2262	

Table 14 illustrates the proportion of combined teacher instruction committed to supporting vocabulary during observed shared reading sessions. During this series the teachers' committed 28% of instructional

discussion to supporting vocabulary development, 21% to reading the text and 51% to non-vocabulary instruction.

Table 14: Sample Proportion of Vocabulary Related Instruction/Reading/Non-Vocabulary Related Instruction – All Teachers

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Reading text	11
Vocabulary instruction	40
Non-vocabulary instruction	49

An estimate of the total time each teacher spent per series on vocabulary instruction was made by comparing the proportion of words used for vocabulary instruction to the total time for each series. Table 15 shows that Teacher One spent 23.75 minutes on vocabulary instruction over four sessions, Teacher Two 7.84 minutes, Teacher Three spent 50.16 and Teacher Four spent 8.83.

During their interview all the teachers were asked about the priority they placed on vocabulary instruction as part of shared reading. Teacher One said that she always set aside one session in particular to discussing words that the text provides opportunities to expand on. Teacher Two indicated that she believed shared reading provided opportunities for instruction although she believed that conversation was a more optimal site for vocabulary development. Teacher Three indicated that vocabulary instruction was a high priority for her class and that shared reading provided opportunities and a supportive context for instruction. Teacher Four indicated that shared reading provided a valuable context for reinforcing word meanings in a text context.

Table 15: Estimate of Time Spent on Vocabulary Related Instruction

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Total minutes in series</i>	<i>% Vocabulary instruction</i>	<i>Minutes of vocabulary instruction for series</i>
1	64.2	37	23.75
2	87.12	9	7.84
3	59.02	85	50.16
4	31.54	28	8.83
Average time of series	60.47		
Average time spent on vocabulary instruction over four sessions			22.64

Teachers' provision of multiple exposures to words

The number of times teachers exposed students to words was assessed in the first instance by the number of readings of each text undertaken (see Table 16). Additional exposure to words was also accounted for if a teacher discussed specific words, provided additional context information about them or elicited word use in addition to reading.

Table 16 illustrates the number of readings of each text that teachers undertook. Teachers One, Two and Three all read the text at least once per session and provided repeated reading by reading the text across the series of sessions. Teacher One read texts an additional time on two occasions and Teacher Three on one occasion. Teacher Four read two texts twice and then two texts once each.

Table 16: Number of Readings Undertaken

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>Number of readings</i>	<i>Number of sessions in series</i>
1	1 Wishy-Washy Mouse	6	4
	2 Wishy-Washy Mirror	3	3
2	1 Rabbit and Rooster's Ride	1	1
	2 Bubble Trouble!	4	4
	3 Little Goat's Coat	4	4
3	1 Sea Witches	5	4
	2 Tuis	4	4
4	1 Three Billy Goats Gruff	4	4
	2 Bridges	1	1
	3 Catmouflage	1	1

All teachers provided additional exposures to specific words (in addition to reading texts), by providing definitional information, metalinguistic and context information, and facilitating discussion about them. Table 17 provides an example of the number of additional exposures provided by teachers for selected words. All teachers in the study provided significant additional exposures, over and above reading them the text, for selected words. The average ratio of additional exposures to exposures during reading for these words is just over 3:1 (3.6:1.25).

In the questionnaire completed after observations were conducted, teachers were asked how many times they conducted shared reading per week. All teachers indicated that they conducted shared reading up to five times per week. During their interview all teachers were asked to elaborate on the strategies they used to support vocabulary during shared reading and how they went about targeting specific words. All teachers indicated that assessment of prior knowledge about text concepts before and during the shared reading session was important. All teachers indicated that

targeting specific words and engaging in supplementary instruction (in various ways) was an important part of shared reading, especially to meet the needs of less able students.

Table 17: Teachers' Provision of Additional Exposures of Selected Words

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Target word</i>	<i>Number of exposures in text</i>	<i>Number of exposures in instructional discussion</i>	<i>Total number of exposures</i>
1	barn	10	10	20
2	kangaroo	9	21	30
3	whisk	5	30	35
4	camouflage	1	11	12

Timing of vocabulary instruction in relation to reading text

Table 18 illustrates when teachers undertook vocabulary instruction in relation to reading the text. Instances of vocabulary instruction were designated as occurring prior, during or after reading the text during each session. Teacher One undertook most vocabulary instruction prior to reading text (62%); she rarely interrupted reading with vocabulary instruction (2%); and she undertook instruction after reading text in 26% of instances. Teacher Two undertook vocabulary instruction mainly prior to (46%) and during (44%) reading. Teacher Two only undertook instruction after reading in 10% of instances. Teacher Three undertook instruction most often after reading texts (65%); she did not interrupt reading texts with instruction at all; and she discussed vocabulary after reading just under half as often as prior to reading (35%). Teacher Four balanced vocabulary instruction throughout the shared lesson; she undertook instruction after reading most often (43%), which was slightly more than she did prior to reading (36%); and she conducted instruction during reading least often (21%).

During interviews, teachers were asked whether they preferred to discuss word meanings before, during or after reading the texts or a combination of these times. Both Teacher One and Two indicated that they would

usually introduce novel words before reading to provide familiarity and then possibly return to them during reading. Teacher Three indicated that she would usually refer back to words once students had heard them read. Teacher Four indicated that she attempted to anticipate difficult words before reading but didn't specify when she would usually discuss them.

Table 18: Timing of Teachers' Vocabulary Instruction in Relation to Reading Texts

	<i>Prior to reading text (%)</i>	<i>During reading text (%)</i>	<i>After reading text (%)</i>
1	62	2	36
2	46	44	10
3	35	0	65
4	36	21	43

Section 2: Avenues for Learning Words and Instructional Methods Utilised by Teachers to Support Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading

This section presents information pertaining to the avenues for learning words and instructional methods utilised by teachers to support vocabulary development during shared reading. Data is presented for each teacher and group of teachers in the order of the proportion that each avenue for learning words is utilised (most to least). This data is then illustrated in two separate graphs for each teacher and group of teachers.

Avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary development utilised by Teacher One

Teacher One taught a new entrant class of 20 five-year-olds. The class included several children who had started school the previous week, one child with English as their second language and three with additional learning needs. Teacher One spent significant time during the first session of both text series introducing the story and discussing concepts to support comprehension. This is reflected in the greater proportion of vocabulary related teacher talk that occurred on the initial days of each series. There were occasions later in each series where vocabulary instruction was not included. Teacher One was observed conducting two series of shared reading sessions. The first series consisted of four lessons conducted on consecutive days; the second series consisted of 3 lessons; the first two conducted consecutively with a gap of one day between the second and the third due to teacher commitments elsewhere.

Figure 1 illustrates avenues for learning word meanings utilised by Teacher One to support vocabulary development during the shared reading sessions. Figure 2 provides a summary of the instructional methods related to vocabulary development used by Teacher One during shared reading. Providing context information about words was the learning avenue utilised most often by Teacher One (38%). Context information was provided primarily using associated words, but also by recasting words in new sentences and rereading specific words to

students. Providing definitional information was also regularly utilised (35%). This avenue for learning words was utilised using images and materials, using personal experience, and by refining and revising definitions given by students. Active processing was utilised less often (22%). To facilitate active processing, Teacher One asked eliciting vocabulary questions and sought some word use from students. Discussion about metalinguistic information was undertaken about only one word by Teacher One in the observed sessions (6%). This avenue for learning words was used exclusively in one session to discuss the plural form of a noun. Figure 2 shows that Teacher One provided associated words most often as an instructional method to support vocabulary development (34%). She also recast words in new sentences and re-read words to students. She used images and materials and personal experience to provide explanations, and also refined and revised definitions given by students. Teacher One asked eliciting vocabulary questions often (17%) and sought some word use from students. Providing metalinguistic information was undertaken rarely by Teacher One.

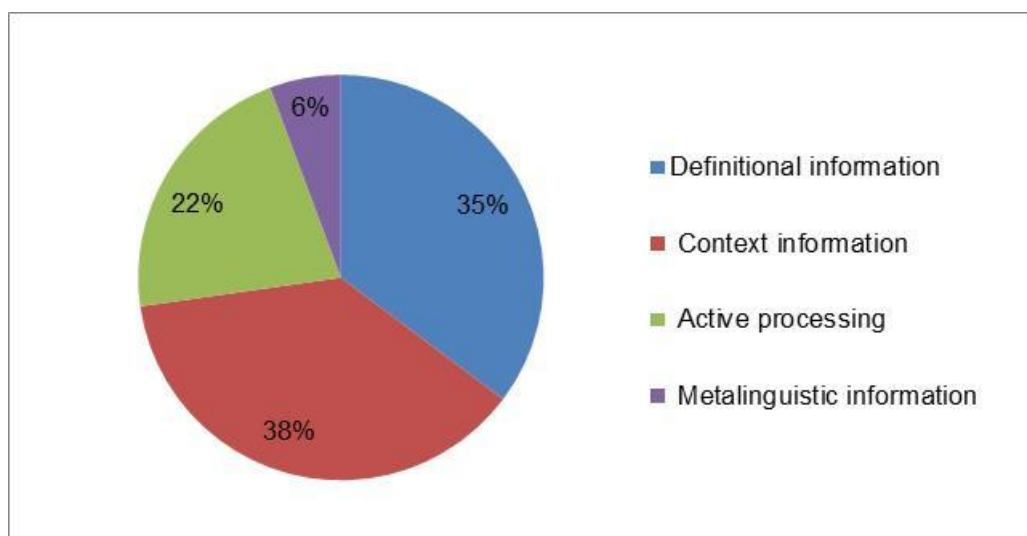


Figure 1: Avenues utilised for learning words – Teacher One

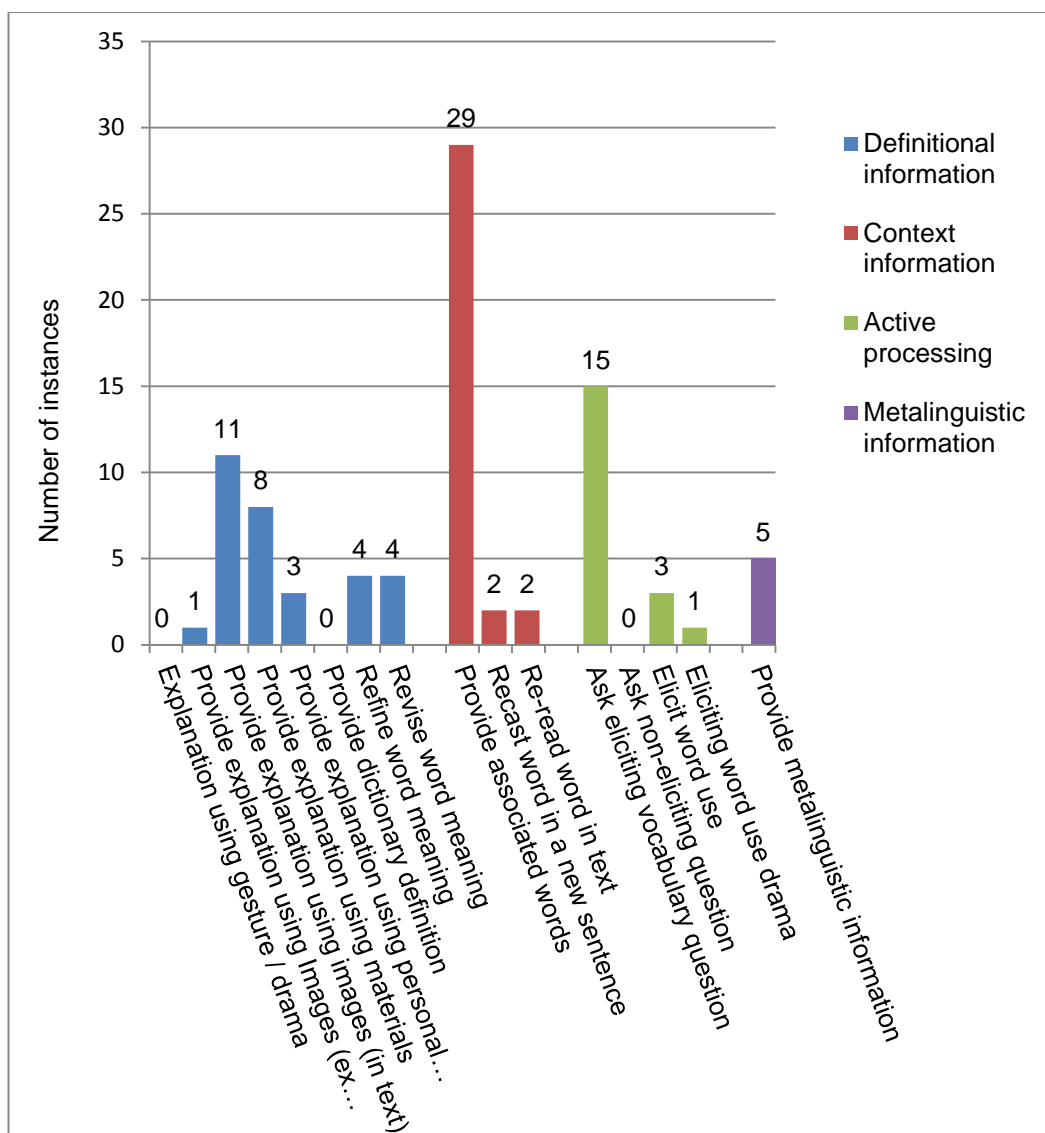


Figure 2: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – Teacher One

Teacher One's perceptions about avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary

After observations were completed, Teacher One was interviewed by the researcher in her classroom after classes had finished for the day. The interview was conducted using a semi-structured interview format whereby the interviewer followed a semi-structured interview question guide developed prior to conducting the interview (Table 5). In order to gain as comprehensive understanding as possible of Teacher One's views, the interviewer allowed the interview to diverge at times from the interview question format in order to capture Teacher One's views on areas not

directly addressed in the question guide. The interview duration was 17 minutes.

During her interview, Teacher One was asked to elaborate on the instructional methods she used to support vocabulary development during shared reading. She indicated that she always ensured that the book she selected contained concepts that most students would have some prior knowledge about:

I think I always look at my book first to see if it's going to connect with the kids because there's some big books there that you think, well, that's not actually going to work with them because they haven't got any prior experience. So I do try to tap into those kinds of things. (Personal communication, September 12, 2013)

She preferred to dedicate a significant part of one session in a series to generating and examining target words that relate to the book topic: "And there's always one day that I spend some time on, um, either words generation, even if its things like adding consonants or things like that" (Teacher One, personal communication, September 12, 2013).

She was asked how she went about using the text to help develop understanding of words. She indicated that in her opinion providing a context for words was essential for learning them and that although she did undertake word instruction in isolation this always needed to be paired with context experience. Teacher One also indicated that she liked to use the supportive context of shared reading by encouraging more able students to provide explanations and so provide less able students with exposure to new words in a non-threatening manner:

I think that for the shared book it's good for some children that don't want to share or don't actually understand it so it makes it safe for them, so that they can hear the vocab without, um, sort of being put on the spot. Whereas, if you're in a small reading group instructional situation you're more likely to, they're going to sort of be nailed, you need to give me some feedback, whereas for some of those kids that need a bit more time, they can sit back and go "Oh, yeah, that's what she means!" Without feeling they're on the spot. (Personal communication, September 12, 2013)

Teacher One indicated that she also liked to use questioning to gauge students prior knowledge of target vocabulary. She stated that she preferred to introduce examples of metalinguistic concepts when they arose but was unlikely to use metalinguistic terms with new entrant students:

So that one with the mouse, it was the mouse and the mice, so that was a perfect teaching opportunity to be able to introduce that plural thing without saying that it's plurals, then that's more confusing for the kids not to give them the technical language. (Personal communication, September 12, 2013)

Avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary development utilised by Teacher Two

Teacher Two taught a class made up of 22 students who had been at school for at least one year. Teacher Two was observed conducting three series of shared reading lessons. The first series was interrupted by teacher illness and consists of just one lesson. The second and third series consist of four lessons each. The lessons in each series were conducted on consecutive days.

Figure 3 illustrates the avenues to learning words utilised by Teacher Two to support vocabulary development during the shared reading sessions. Figure 4 illustrates Teacher Two's use of instructional methods related to vocabulary development during shared reading. Teacher Two utilised definitional information significantly more often than other avenues for learning word meanings to support vocabulary development (46%). She provided explanations using personal experience, images both in and outside of the text, materials, gestures and drama. She refined students' explanations frequently and refined word meanings. Teacher Two encouraged active processing of words just over half as often as utilised definitional information (25%). She asked both eliciting and non-eliciting questions and elicited word use in the form of drama. Providing context information was facilitated slightly less than encouraging active processing (22%). Context information was primarily given in the form of associated words although she also recast a word in a new sentence. A large

proportion of definitional information was facilitated during two sessions in one series when Teacher One shared artefacts related to the story and provided a range of related definitions. She discussed metalinguistic information on four occasions (6%).

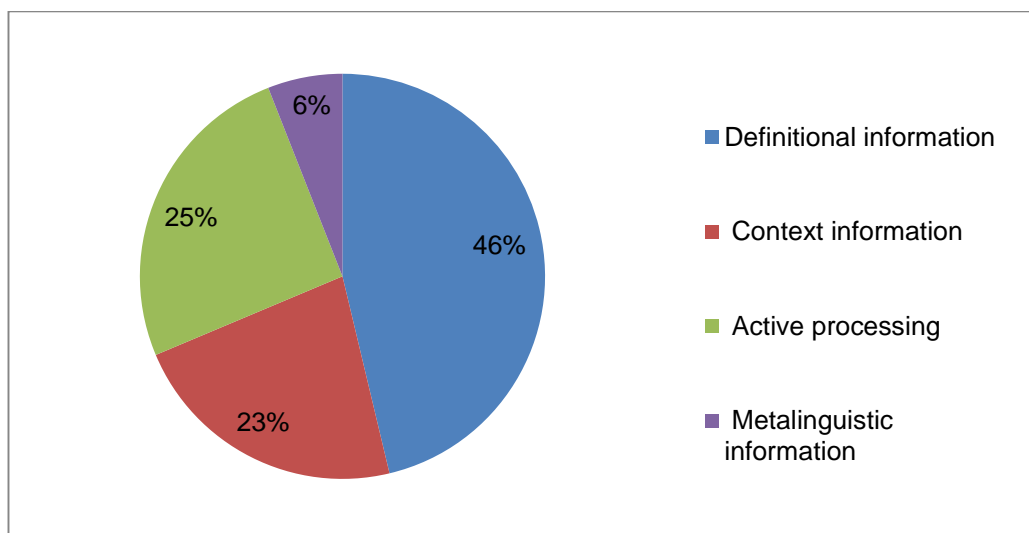


Figure 3: Avenues utilised for learning words – Teacher Two

Figure 4 shows that Teacher Two provided associated words often as an instructional method to support vocabulary development (21%). She also refined word meanings often and provided explanations in a range of ways, including using gestures, drama, materials and images. Teacher Two asked questions about words frequently using both eliciting (13%) and non-eliciting questions (10%). She provided and discussed metalinguistic information rarely.

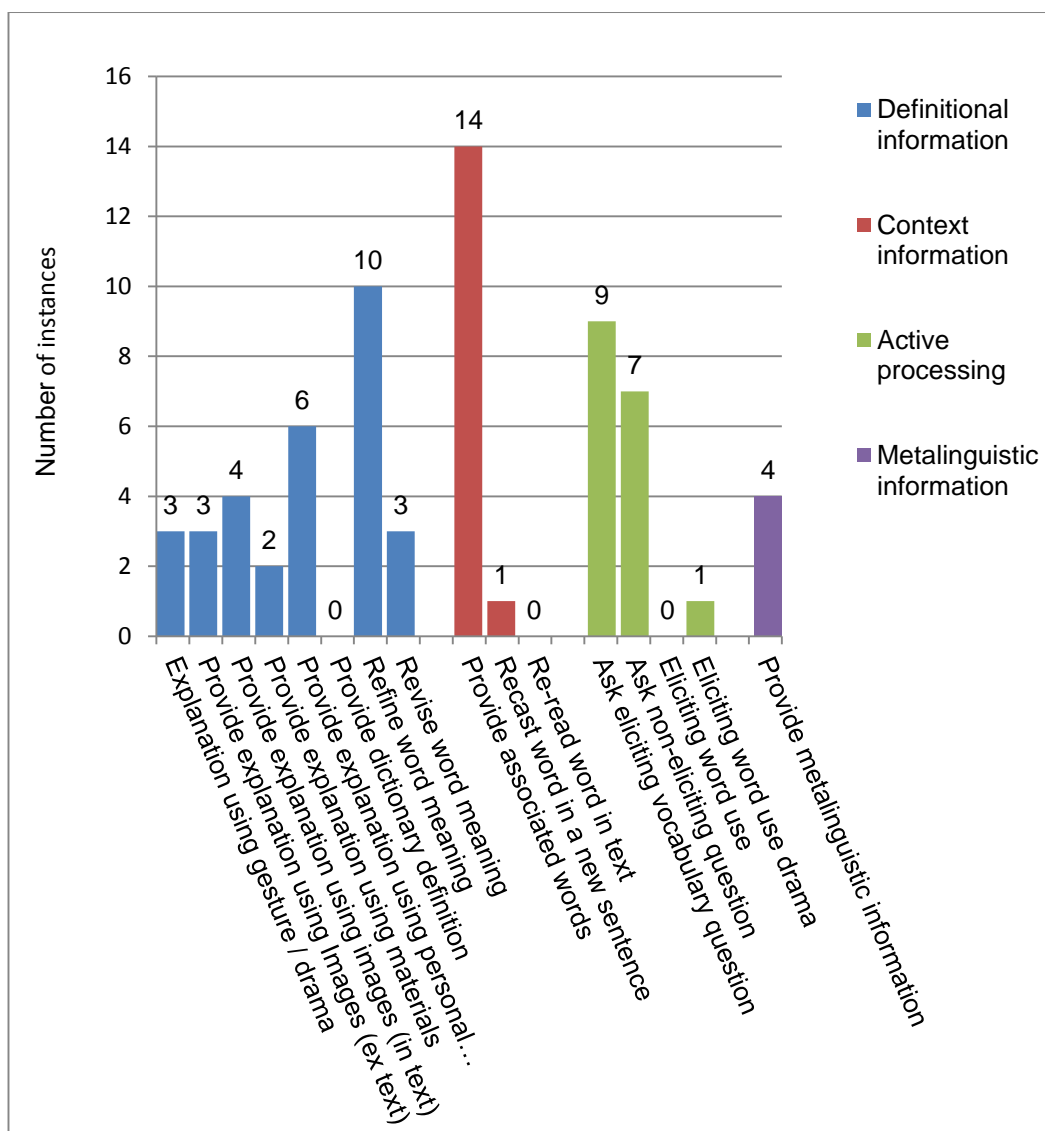


Figure 4: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – Teacher Two

Teacher Two's perceptions about avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary

After all observations were completed, Teacher Two was interviewed by the researcher in her classroom after classes had finished for the day. The interview was conducted using a semi-structured interview format whereby the interviewer followed a semi-structured interview question guide developed prior to conducting the interview (Table 5). In order to gain as comprehensive understanding as possible of Teacher Two's views the interviewer allowed the interview to diverge at times from the interview question format in order to capture Teacher Two's views on areas not

directly addressed in the question guide. The interview duration was 19 minutes.

During her interview, Teacher Two was asked about how she went about supporting vocabulary development during shared reading. Teacher Two emphasised the wide range of language and literacy ability (particularly in terms of vocabulary levels) in her group and that it was important to attempt to cater to all needs:

Ok. Well I guess first there's a huge range of oral abilities and levels because first there's the ESOL, there's the children who come to school without having exp—you know they've got a very limited vocabulary and so their oral language level is pretty low. And so there's the whole range right up to children who are really ... obviously have had a lot of input from adults who've talked to them, had conversations, so there's that range that you're dealing with. (Personal communication, September 12, 2013)

She drew attention to the necessity to maintain student engagement during shared reading for those with less reading and language ability. She emphasised that in her opinion, discussions were an important means by which vocabulary is acquired in young children: "This business of developing vocabulary, I think, for me it's, um, conversation is the greatest vocabulary development, more than just, just, the set formalised text reading" (Teacher Two, personal communication, September 12, 2013).

Avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary development utilised by Teacher Three

Teacher Three taught a class of 16 children made up of students who have been at school at least four years. The class size had recently been reduced due to the level of need of the students. Teacher Three was observed conducting two series of shared reading lessons each consisting of four lessons conducted on consecutive days.

Figure 5 illustrates the avenues for learning words utilised by Teacher Three to support vocabulary development during the shared reading sessions. Figure 6 illustrates Teacher Three's use of instructional methods

related to vocabulary development during shared reading. Teacher Three utilised active processing significantly more than other avenues for learning word meanings (36%). The majority of her interactions involved non-eliciting questions. She also asked eliciting questions and elicited word use from her students. She provided definitional information often (26%), employing (and modelling use of) a dictionary as well as providing explanations from personal experience and using images, gestures and drama. She provided context information primarily through the use of associated words, she also recast words and reread them in the text. Teacher Three provided and discussed metalinguistic information relatively frequently in relation to the other teachers in the study (16%).

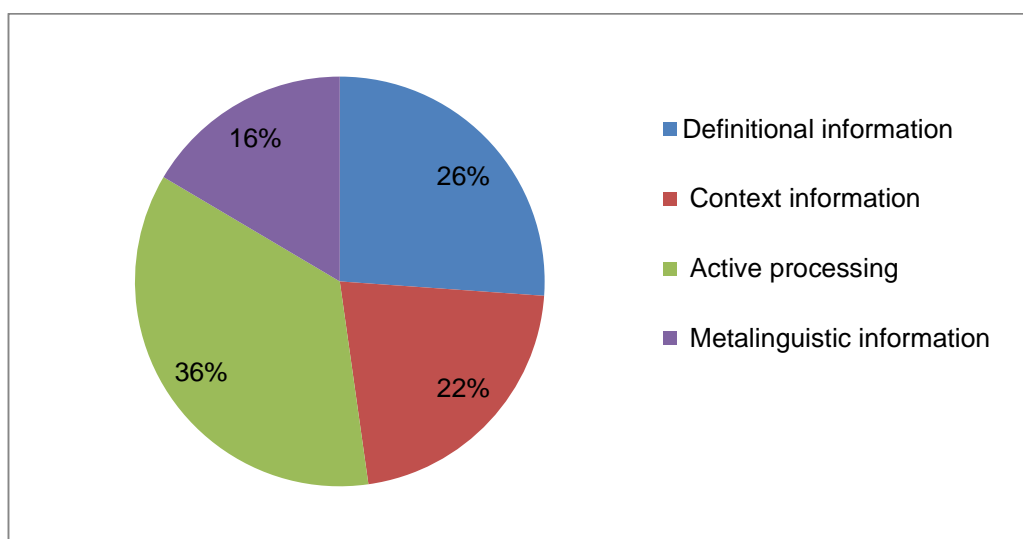


Figure 5: Avenues utilised for learning new words – Teacher Three

As Figure 6 illustrates, Teacher Three used non-eliciting questions most often as a mode of instruction to support vocabulary development (26%). In addition to this she used a balanced range of other methods, including re-reading and re-casting words often, providing explanations in a range of ways, including employing (and modelling use of) a dictionary, using images, personal experience, materials and gestures. She discussed and provided metalinguistic information relatively frequently in relation to the other teachers in the study (5%).

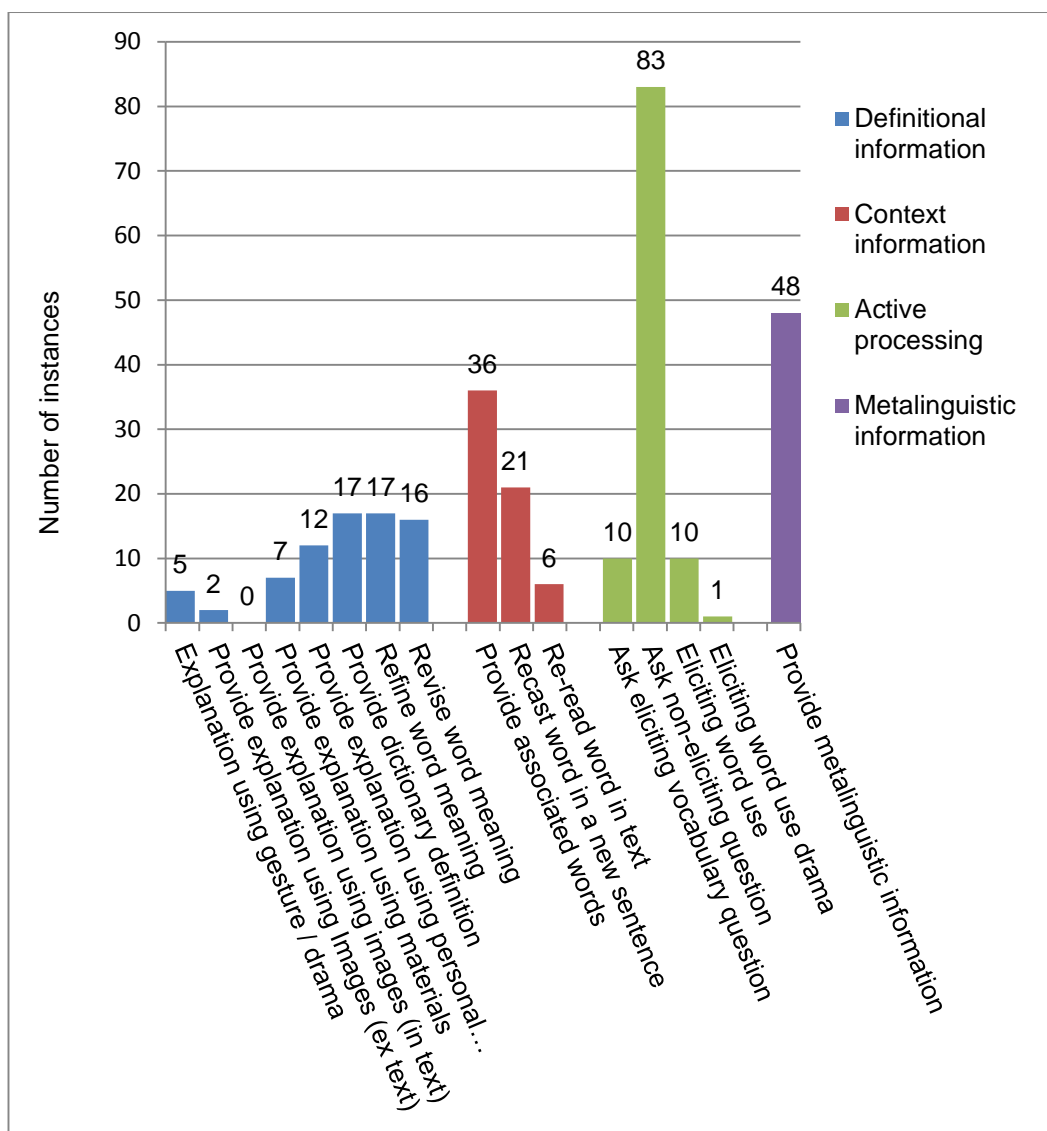


Figure 6: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – Teacher Three

Teacher Three's perceptions about avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary

After all observations were completed, Teacher Three was interviewed by the researcher in her classroom after classes had finished for the day. The interview was conducted using a semi-structured interview format whereby the interviewer followed a semi-structured interview question guide developed prior to conducting the interview (see Table 5). In order to gain as comprehensive understanding as possible of Teacher Three's views the interviewer allowed the interview to diverge at times from the interview question format in order to capture Teacher Three's views on areas not

directly addressed in the question guide. The interview duration was 18 minutes.

During her interview, Teacher Three was asked to discuss the instructional methods she used to support vocabulary during shared reading. She indicated that she believed that her group were characterised by a particular need to be exposed to new vocabulary in an intensive manner because of what she characterised as a lack of opportunities to be exposed to new vocabulary either in general conversations or from their independent reading: “Least half my class are ESOL and the others aren’t ESOL but they come from backgrounds where English is not spoken correctly, so they’re almost like ESOL” (Personal communication, September 26, 2013).

She described how she believed that it was important that her students be able to use words correctly and that they have a metalinguistic understanding of them:

So it’s about actually opening them up to a large bank of vocabulary. And not only getting them to read them but to understand them and be able to use them ... what meaning they sort of have in a sentence, if it’s a verb or a noun because then they’ll understand where to put that word in a sentence if they choose to use it. (Teacher Three, personal communication, September 26, 2013)

She believed it was important to provide a range of synonyms for new words:

I: “I noticed a few times that you elicit synonyms from the children. Do you find that’s a useful strategy?”

S: “Yes because there’s some kids that they’ll hear a word and they’ve heard the dictionary, they’ve heard people talk about it, and it’s still making no sense to them. They’ve no idea what that is. So when you ask them, “So ok, now you know what this word is, what are synonyms?” And sometimes I’ll ask them to give antonyms because for those children sometimes the opposite meaning helps them to understand somehow, as well.

She stated that she believed it was important that her students use new words and listen to feedback about them repeatedly in various contexts, in

order to secure and refine their understanding of them (Teacher Three, personal communication, September 26, 2013).

Avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary development utilised by Teacher Four

Teacher Four taught a class of 14 children who had been at school for at least four years. Teacher Four taught part-time in the class, teaching Reading Recovery for the remainder of her time. The group had two children with English as their second language. Five of the group were assessed as being well below the national standard in reading and writing. Teacher Four was observed conducting two series of shared reading lessons consisting of four lessons conducted on consecutive days in the first series and two lessons conducted on consecutive days in the second series. The second series was interrupted by an unanticipated school event. In the first series, Teacher Four focused vocabulary support in the first session of the series. This session was primarily focused on introducing the story and building prior knowledge. The chosen text was a traditional story that the children knew well. Teacher Four did not use vocabulary support strategies for the remainder of this series, choosing instead to focus instruction on other features of the text. This lesson series involved a text that she assessed as having more novel words and concepts. This is reflected in the increased use of vocabulary support strategies in this series.

Figure 7 illustrates the avenues for learning words utilised by Teacher Four to support vocabulary development during the shared reading sessions. Figure 8 illustrates Teacher Four's use of instructional methods related to vocabulary development during shared reading.

Figure 7 illustrates that Teacher Four's utilised avenues for learning word in a balanced manner. She utilised definitional information and context information equally (31% each). She provided definitions in a range of ways, including using images, gestures and drama, dictionary definitions and refining and revising word meanings. She provided associated words

primarily to offer context information but also recast and re-read words in sentences. She engaged students in active processing slightly less often (28%), most often asking eliciting vocabulary questions. As with the other teachers in the study, providing and discussing metalinguistic information was the least utilised avenue for learning words (10%). Teacher Four used eliciting questions (25%) and provided associated words (19%) most often as methods of supporting vocabulary development. She provided explanations in a range of ways, including using images, gestures and drama, dictionary definitions and refining and revising word meanings; she also recast and re-read words in sentences.

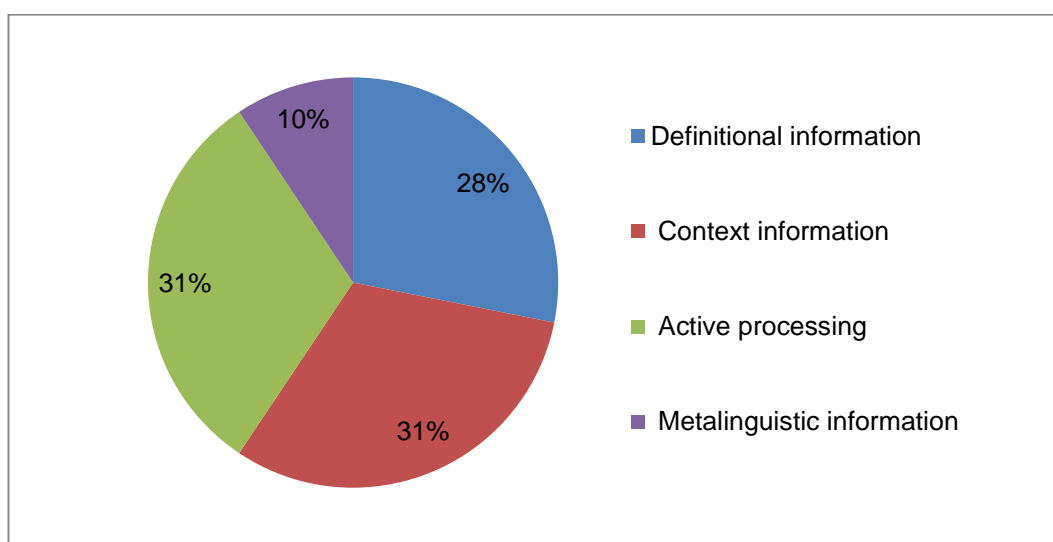


Figure 7: Avenues utilised for learning new words – Teacher Four

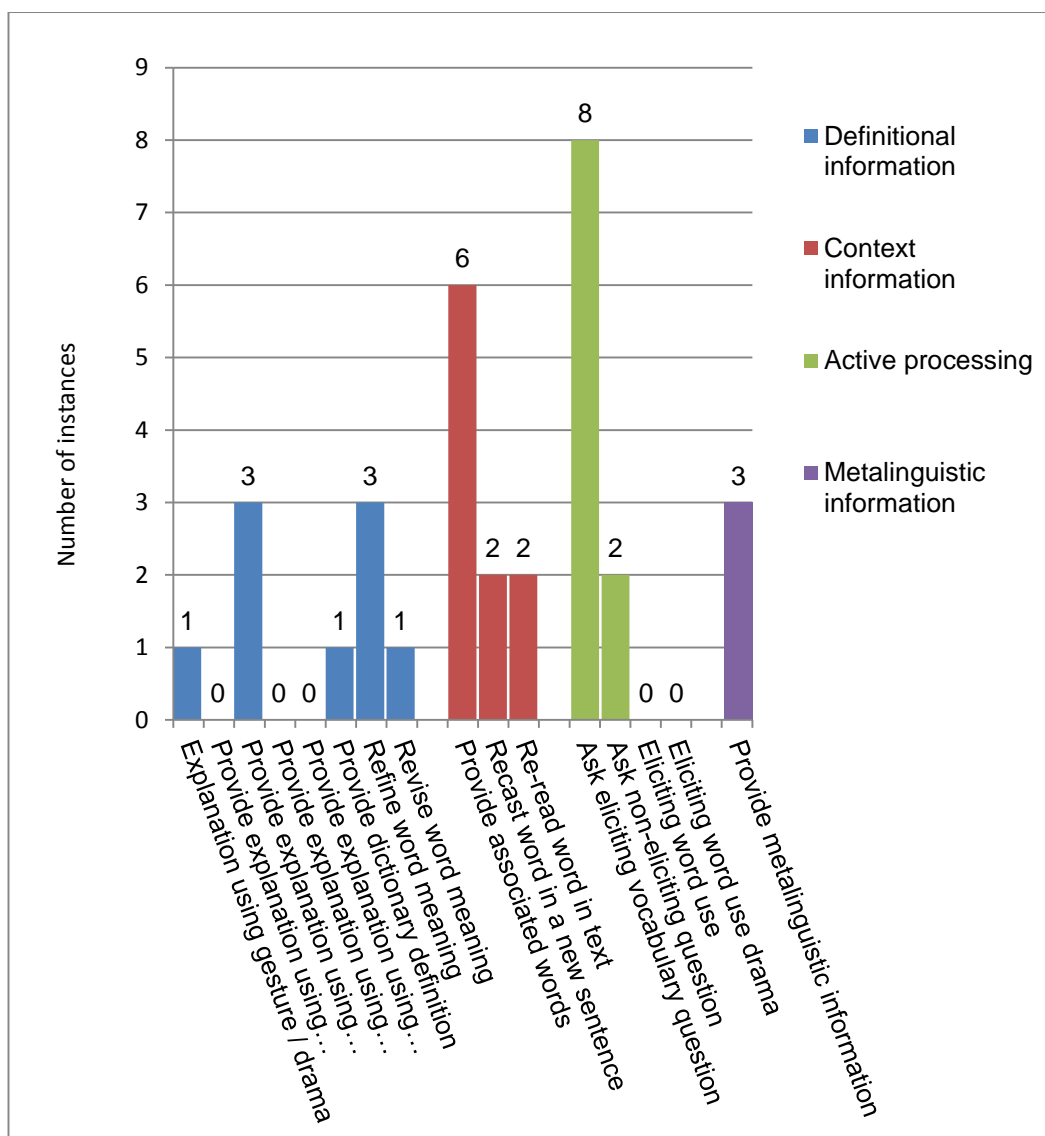


Figure 8: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – Teacher Four

Teacher Four's perceptions about avenues for learning words and instructional methods for supporting vocabulary

After all observations were completed, Teacher Four was interviewed by the researcher in her classroom after classes had finished for the day. The interview was conducted using a semi-structured interview format whereby the interviewer followed a semi-structured interview question guide developed prior to conducting the interview (see Table 5). In order to gain as comprehensive understanding as possible of Teacher Four's views the interviewer allowed the interview to diverge at times from the interview question format in order to capture Teacher Four's views on areas not

directly addressed in the question guide. The interview duration was 24 minutes.

During her interview, Teacher Four was asked to discuss how she went about supporting vocabulary learning during shared reading. She discussed how she believed that it was important to explore new words in the context of the text where the children could see and hear them and that this may happen multiple times. She described how she sought to support this learning with more explicit discussion about words that she assessed may be novel words:

Um ... sometimes there might be one word in particular that I know they won't understand. Like in the "camouflage" we did that before I introduced the poem. So they had something that they knew. I'm trying to make it so that it's holistic, it's not just one little word used in isolation and never used again. And a lot of the words that are up on that wall, most of the kids don't use ... I think that if they've learnt it in isolation, then you integrate back into the shared reading or the writing or whatever, then you're reinforcing it. It's weaving it in. So hopefully something might be going in and staying there.
(Personal communication, September 26, 2013)

She indicated that discussion may involve exploring metalinguistic features and the purpose of the word in the text as well as using images and sometimes a dictionary:

One day you may pull out the strong verbs that the author has used. You might look at how they've used a strong verb and then an adverb to make it even stronger. Trying to get the kids to see how the language works together. Paint a picture in their brain.
(Teacher Four, personal communication, September 26, 2013)

She articulated how some of her students gained an understanding of word meanings immediately while others required multiple exposures to a new word:

And what I'm finding is that it takes a lot of time. And kids like D, they get it straight away, but I have to do six or seven or eight examples with most of the class before they start to get it. And even then when you send them away to write unassisted, they're back to writing, they went home. (Teacher Four, personal communication, September 26, 2013)

Avenues for learning words and instructional methods utilised by all teachers

Figure 9 illustrates the avenues to learning words utilised by all teachers to support vocabulary development during the shared reading sessions. Across all the teachers, a balanced range of avenues for learning words was utilised. Providing definitional information and facilitating active processing form nearly a third each of the proportion of avenues that teachers were observed utilising (31% each). Context information was utilised less often (25%). Providing and discussing metalinguistic information was observed being used the least of all the strategies (13%).

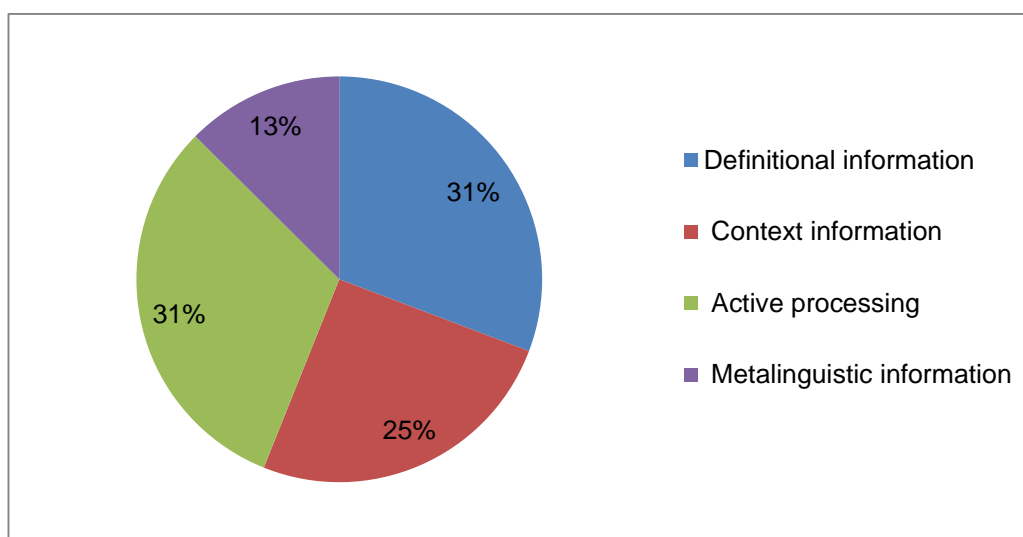


Figure 9: Avenues utilised for learning new words – all teachers

Figure 10 illustrates all teachers use of instructional methods related to vocabulary development during shared reading. It indicates that the use of non-eliciting questions and the provision of associated words were the most used methods of instruction to support vocabulary development during shared reading, although the combined total of both questions types (28%) indicates that questioning in general was a highly used method of instruction. A range of explanation methods were used, including using images, gestures and drama, dictionary definitions and refining and revising word meanings. Recasting and re-reading words in sentences were also used.

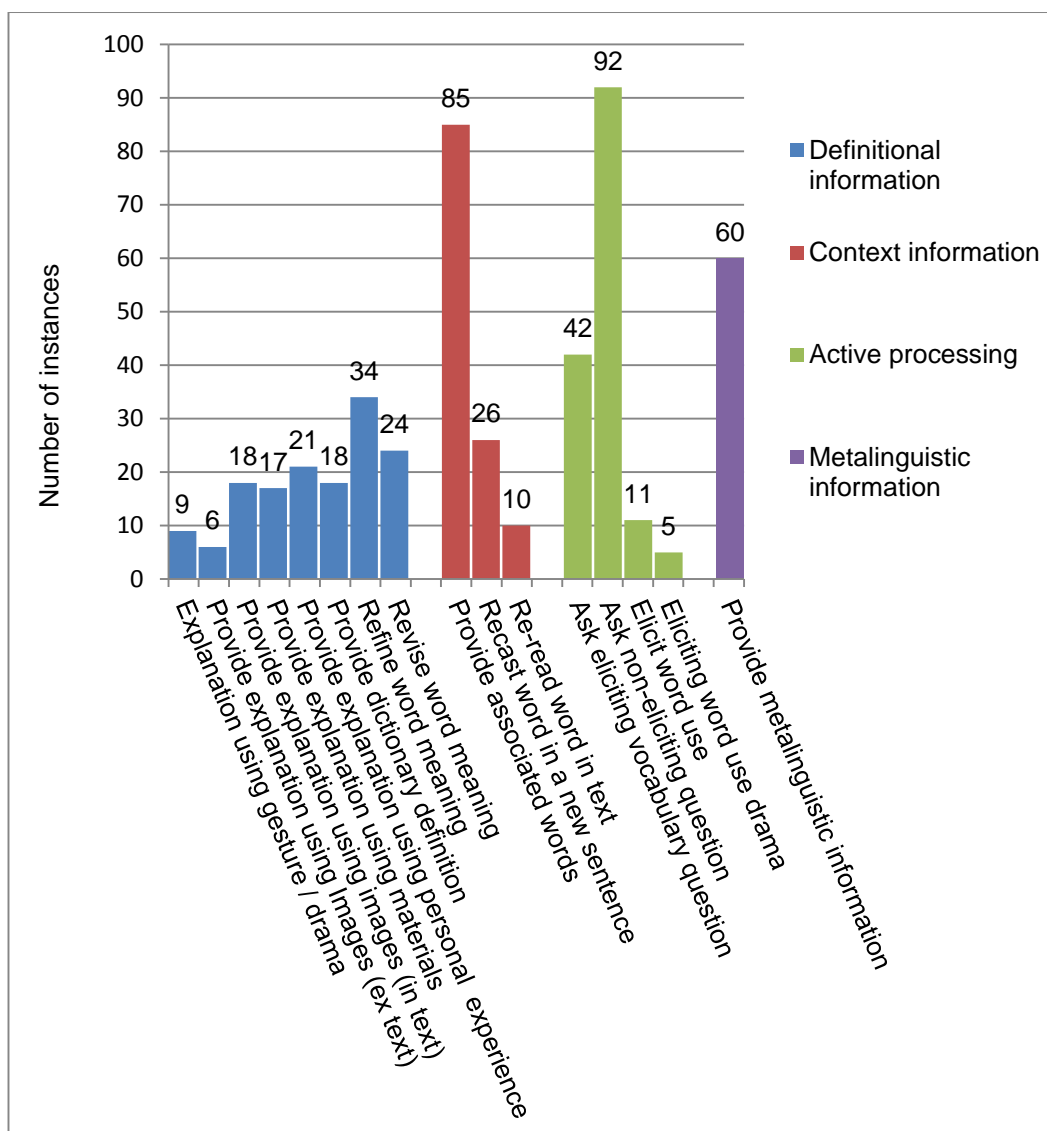


Figure 10: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – all teachers

Section 3: Distinctions Between the Characteristics of Shared Reading Practice and the Instructional Methods Utilised by Teachers of Younger Junior Classes and Those of Older Junior Classes in Relation to Supporting Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading

Shared reading practices

The teachers of younger students in this study used narrative texts in a Big Book format for the observed shared reading sessions. Of the teachers of older students, Teacher Three used poems exclusively and Teacher Four used narrative, poetic and non-fiction texts in a Big Book format. Teachers of younger students stated that they followed a junior

protocol that required them to use levelled Big Books for shared reading. Teachers of older students indicated that they tended to choose a variety of text types for shared reading. The teachers of younger students conducted shared reading sessions on average for 14.5 minutes. The teachers of older students conducted slightly shorter sessions (9.5 minutes). The teachers of older students committed on average a greater proportion of time to supporting vocabulary development (56%) than the teachers of younger students (23%).

Avenues for learning words and instructional methods utilised by teachers of younger students (Years 0–1)

Figure 11 illustrates the avenues to learning words utilised by teachers of younger students to support vocabulary development during the shared reading sessions. These teachers utilised definitional information to support vocabulary learning most often (40%). They provided definitions in a range of ways, including using images in the text, and supporting materials, relating personal experiences related to words and revising students definitions. They provided context information slightly less (31%) using associated words most often. These teachers facilitated active processing relatively less often (23%). They asked eliciting questions as well as some non-eliciting questions and encouraged students to use words in sentences and in dramas. They provided and discussed metalinguistic information relatively rarely (6%).

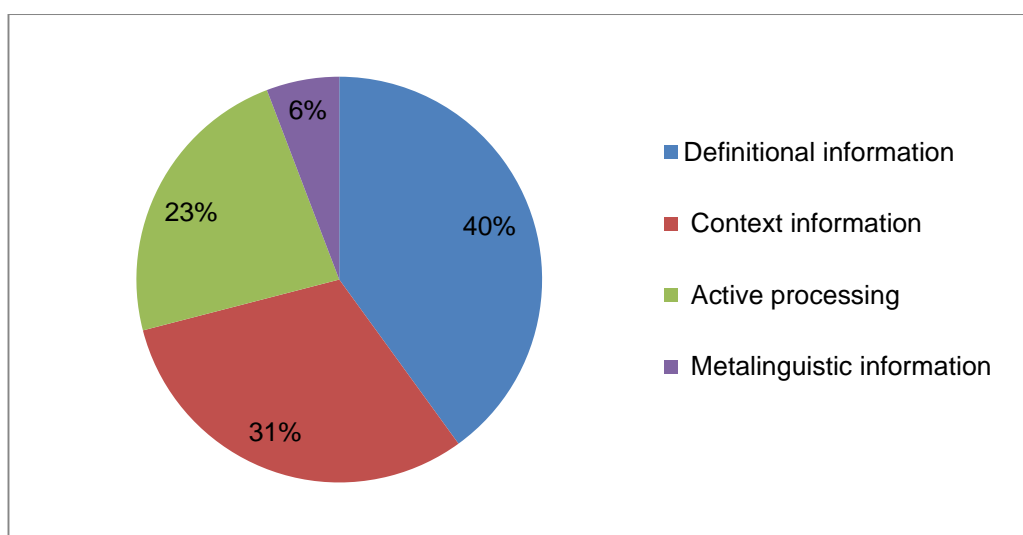


Figure 11: Avenues for learning new words facilitated – teachers of younger students

Figure 12 shows that teachers of younger students utilised associated words most often as an instructional method to support vocabulary. They use a range of explanation methods, including images, gestures and drama, dictionary definitions and refining and revising word meanings. They did not use dictionary definitions. They asked questions often (20%), using primarily eliciting questions (15%).

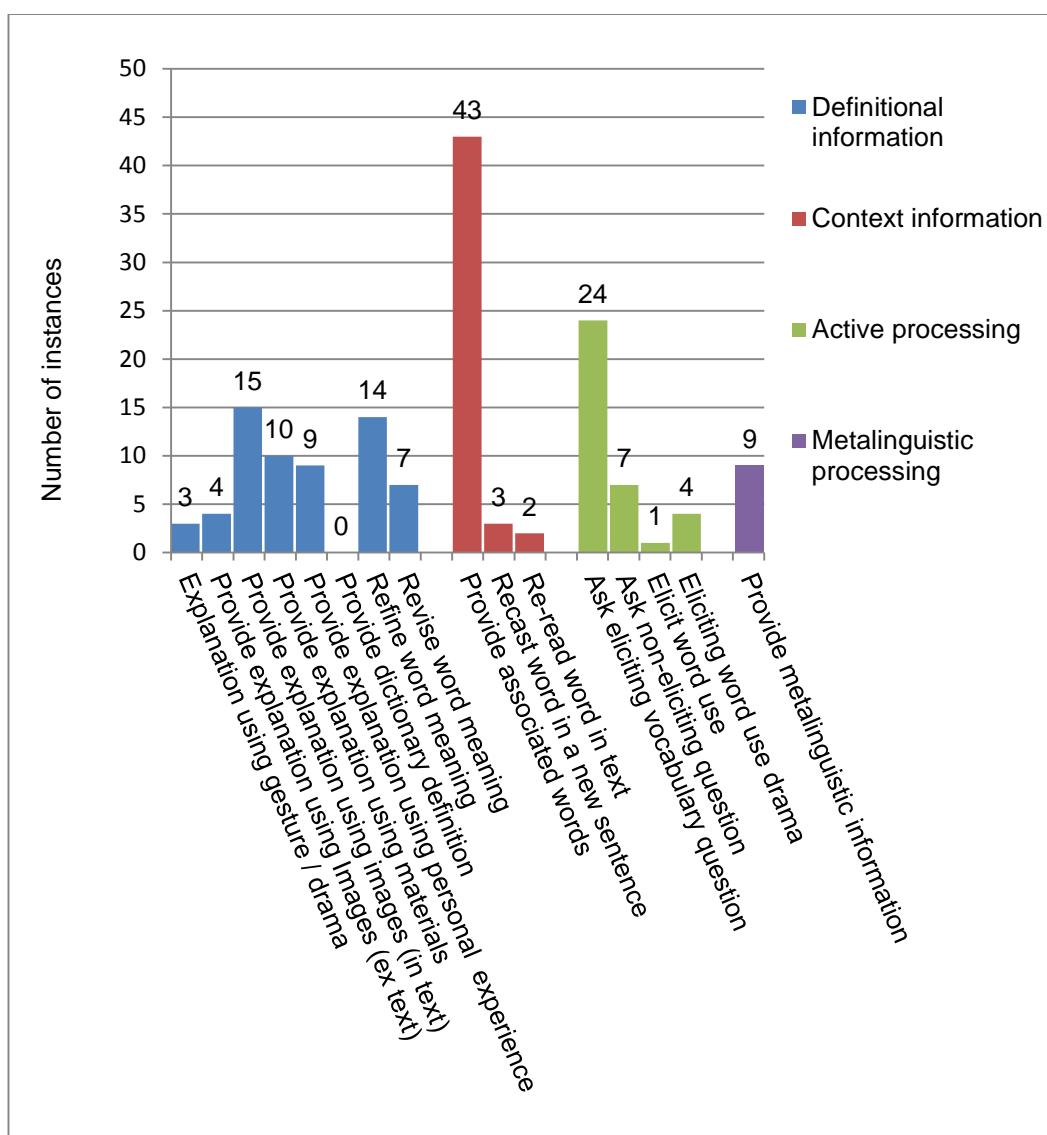


Figure 12: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – teachers of younger students

Avenues for learning words and instructional methods utilised by teachers of older students (Years 2–4)

Figure 13 illustrates the avenues to learning words utilised by teachers of older students to support vocabulary development during the shared reading sessions. Figure 14 illustrates teachers of older students use of instructional methods related to vocabulary development during shared reading. Teachers used deep processing most often during shared reading (35%). Figure 13 shows that these teachers encouraged active processing most often, asking non-eliciting questions and some eliciting questions as well as encouraging students to use words in sentences. They provided definitional information (26%) and context information

frequently but less often (23%) than encouraging active processing. They provided definitions in a range of ways, including using dictionaries, personal experiences and refining and revising word meanings. They used the provision and discussion of metalinguistic information least often as a strategy (16%).

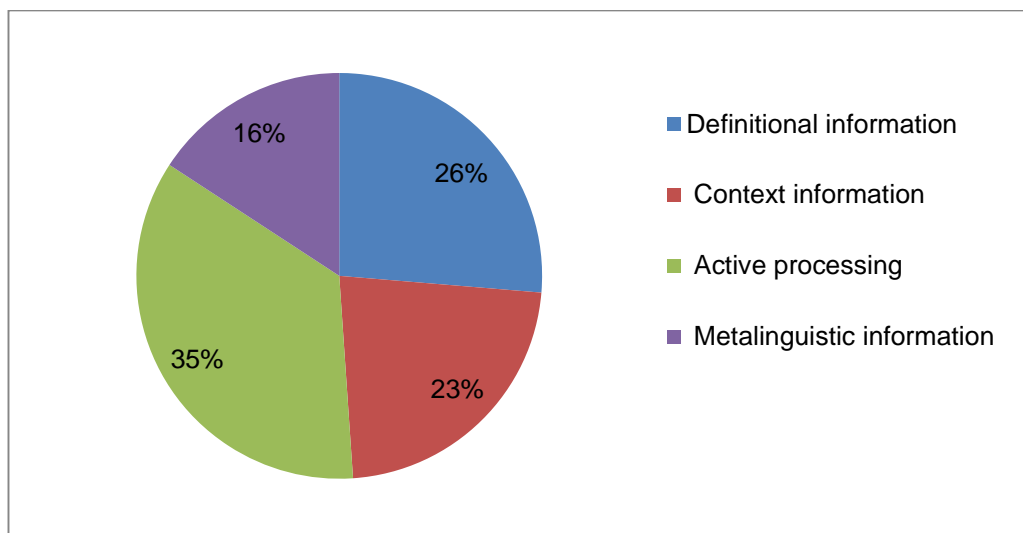


Figure 13: Avenues for learning new words utilised – teachers of older students

Figure 14 shows that teachers of older students used non-eliciting questions most often as an instructional method to support vocabulary development during shared reading. They used associated words and instruction about metalinguistic information relatively frequently. They used a range of methods to provide explanations, including dictionary definitions, refining and revising word meanings, personal experiences, images and gestures and drama.

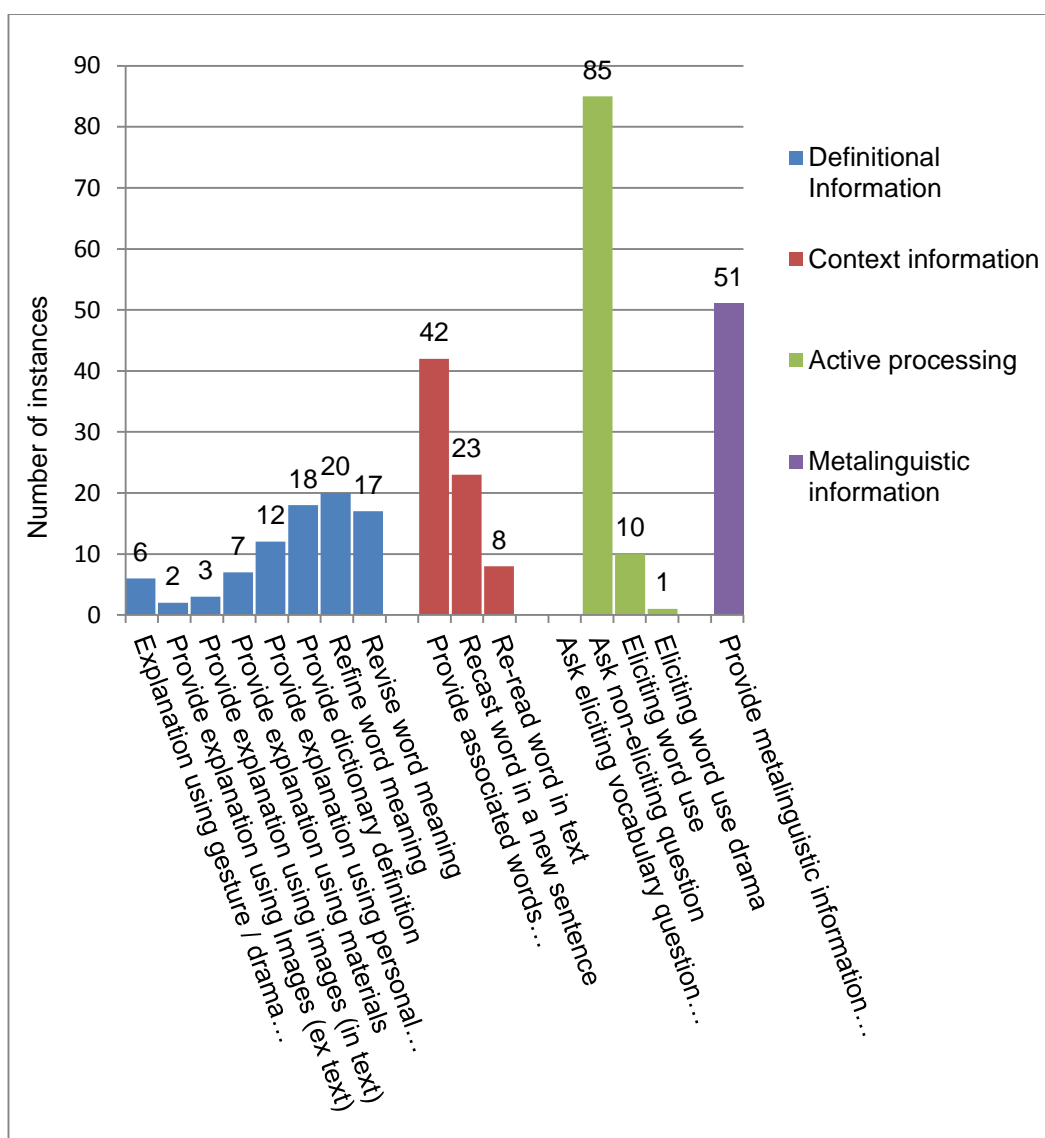


Figure 14: Instructional methods to support vocabulary development – teachers of older students

Summary

Section 1 of this chapter presented results pertaining to the characteristics of exemplary teachers shared reading practice that contribute to vocabulary support during shared reading.

All the teachers in the current study conducted a series of shared reading sessions where they read and discussed one text multiple times in consecutive sessions. Teachers conducted an average of three shared reading sessions per text. The average shared reading session was 13.5 minutes long. Teachers used a range narrative, non-fiction and poem text

types. The teachers dedicated a substantial proportion of instructional discussion to supporting vocabulary development during shared reading. Taken across one sample series of shared reading lessons, an average of 21% of instructional discussion was allocated to supporting vocabulary development. All teachers indicated that shared reading provided a constructive context for supporting vocabulary instruction and that it was an integral part of their shared reading practice. As well as reading the texts multiple times, all teachers in this study provided significant additional exposures as part of discussions and instruction about selected words. These teachers undertook vocabulary related instruction at a variety of times in relation to when they read the text. Two teachers rarely interrupted reading with vocabulary related instruction, while two teachers regularly interspersed instruction with text reading.

Section Two of this chapter presented data pertaining to the avenues utilised for acquiring word meanings and instructional methods exemplary teachers of junior classrooms in this study utilised to support the vocabulary development of their students during shared reading.

Teacher One taught a Year 0–1 class of 20 five-year-olds at the time of observations. The majority of her vocabulary instruction during shared reading tended to occur in the earlier sessions of each shared reading series. She facilitated the provision of a combination of definitional information and context information most often to support vocabulary development during shared reading. She utilised active processing relatively less often but still frequently. She used a range of methods to support vocabulary, including recasting words in new sentences, re-reading the word to students, providing explanations in a range of ways and asking eliciting vocabulary questions. She provided and discussed metalinguistic information rarely. Teacher One provided associated words often as a way of facilitating the development of context information. In her interview, Teacher One indicated that providing a context for words was an essential part of securing knowledge of them and that shared reading was a good instructional context for supporting vocabulary for both able and less able young language and literacy learners.

Teacher Two facilitated the development of definitional information most often to support vocabulary learning during shared reading. She supplemented this with a balance of context information and by facilitating active processing. She provided and discussed metalinguistic information rarely. During some sessions, Teacher One did not undertake vocabulary instruction. Similarly to Teacher One, Teacher Two used associated words often as an instructional method to support vocabulary development during shared reading. She also asked questions about words often, using both eliciting and non-eliciting questions. In addition, she used a balanced range of other instructional methods to support vocabulary, including recasting words in new sentences and re-reading words to students, as well as providing explanations in a range of ways. Some instruction about the metalinguistic features of words was undertaken. During her interview, Teacher One indicated her approach to vocabulary support was guided by a need to cater to the wide spread of language and literacy ability in her group and the need to keep students engaged during shared reading.

Teacher Three taught a group of 16 Year 3–4 students at the time of observations. Teacher Three facilitated active processing about words often as an avenue to learn words. Teacher Three used a balanced range of instructional methods to support vocabulary development during shared reading. Teacher Three used questioning often as a method to support vocabulary, asking eliciting questions most often. In addition, she used a range of methods to provide explanations about words and provided and discussed metalinguistic information. Teacher Three indicated during her interview that her choice of instructional methods was guided by her perception that her class required intensive vocabulary support to compensate for a perceived lack of exposure to high interest words in other contexts.

Teacher Four taught a group of 14 Year 3–4 students at the time of observations. Teacher Four read a range of texts and engaged in vocabulary related instruction in selected sessions. Teacher Four facilitated a balanced range of avenues for learning new words. Teacher

Four used eliciting questions most often as a method of supporting vocabulary development during shared reading. She also provided associated words frequently as well as using a range of methods to convey explanations. She provided and discussed metalinguistic information rarely. In her interview, Teacher Four indicated that she believed it was important to provide a balance of explicit instruction and context experience of words to secure a robust understanding of them.

Section Three of this chapter presented data pertaining to the distinctions between the characteristics of shared reading practice and the instructional methods utilised by teachers of younger junior classes and those of older junior classes in relation to supporting vocabulary development during shared reading.

Teachers of younger students in this study tended to conduct shared reading sessions for slightly longer than the teacher of older students. However, the teachers of older students had a higher proportion of each session dedicated to vocabulary support. Viewed as a group, the teachers of younger students utilised the provision of definitional information slightly more than other avenues for learning words. They provided associated words frequently and used a wide range of explanation methods to support vocabulary development during shared reading. They asked mainly eliciting questions. Teachers of older students facilitated vocabulary development via a balanced range of avenues for learning words. These teachers used non-eliciting questions most often as an instructional method to support vocabulary development during shared reading. They also used associated words and instruction about metalinguistic information relatively frequently as well as a range of methods to provide explanations. They provided and discussed metalinguistic information more often than teachers of younger students. These teachers facilitated a balanced range of avenues for learning new words.

Viewed together, the teachers in this study utilised a balanced range of avenues to facilitate learning vocabulary and used a balanced range of

instructional methods to support vocabulary development during shared reading, with non-eliciting questions and the provision of associated words being the most frequently utilised methods.

Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter is presented in two sections: discussion and conclusion.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to observe exemplary teachers of junior classes conducting shared reading, and describe the specific features of their practice that supported the vocabulary development of their students. The teachers completed a brief questionnaire to provide information for observation planning and about the setting they teach in. The researcher observed four junior school teachers conducting shared reading sessions with their classes. Subsequent to completing observations, each teacher was interviewed about their teaching practice in relation to supporting vocabulary development during shared reading. Research over the last two decades has looked at the effects of shared reading on vocabulary development and at ways that teachers can boost vocabulary development during shared reading. However, little research has looked into how exemplary teachers go about supporting vocabulary development during shared reading in New Zealand. This chapter compares the findings of recent research into effective vocabulary support during shared reading and the practice of a group of New Zealand teachers. The research questions addressed in this study are:

- 1) What are the characteristics of the shared reading practice of exemplary teachers of junior classes in low decile schools that support vocabulary development during shared reading?
- 2) What avenues for learning words do these teachers utilise and, what instructional methods to support vocabulary development do these teachers use during shared reading?
- 3) What distinctions are there between the characteristics of shared reading practice and the instructional methods utilised by teachers of younger junior classes and those of older junior classes in relation to supporting vocabulary development during shared reading?

The discussion section of this chapter is organised into three parts. Part 1 discusses findings pertaining to the characteristics of the shared reading practice of the exemplary teachers of junior classes in this study that support vocabulary development. This section also includes a discussion of participating school, teacher and class profiles based on information obtained from teacher questionnaires. Part 2 discusses findings pertaining to the avenues for learning words and instructional methods utilised by these teachers to facilitate vocabulary development during shared reading. Part 3 discusses findings pertaining to distinctions between the characteristics of practice and instructional methods utilised by the teachers of younger and older classes in relation to facilitating vocabulary development during shared reading.

Part 1: Characteristics of the Shared Reading Practice That Support Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading

Proportion of vocabulary related instruction/reading/non-vocabulary related instruction

Research indicates that vocabulary knowledge is acquired more effectively from shared texts when reading is accompanied by explanations and discussion about word meanings (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Brett et al., 1996; McKeown & Beck, 2004; Stahl, 2005; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Research also shows that learning during shared reading is at its most effective when reading text is accompanied by purposeful discussions about text features and meanings (Pressley, 2006). However, maintaining a unified narrative by reading uninterrupted is also important to provide students with a cohesive experience of texts (Ministry of Education, 2003). Therefore teachers are faced with balancing instructional discussion about aspects of texts with providing aesthetic experiences of shared texts. This affects decisions about the amount of vocabulary instruction they undertake,

Using a sample series of shared reading sessions from all teachers, this study showed that the average amount of time given to vocabulary related instruction was 23% or just under a quarter of the observed series

(including reading the text). Having said this, the teachers in the current study varied significantly in terms of the amount of vocabulary related instruction they undertook. The range of time given to vocabulary instruction varied from 9% to 85% in the sample series (the full percentages being: 9%, 28%, 37% and 85% for individual teachers). There may be a number of reasons for this broad range of proportions of shared reading series committed to vocabulary instruction. First, it may indicate a variation in the teachers' beliefs about the importance of vocabulary instruction during shared reading. However, when asked about how they go about supporting vocabulary during shared reading, all the teachers indicated that they believed that shared reading was an ideal context within which to learn and teach word meanings, which may imply that significant proportions of vocabulary support would be apparent for all teachers. Teachers were not asked to estimate the actual time they usually spent vocabulary learning alongside other aspects of literacy learning during shared reading. Only Teacher One (28%) indicated that she always tried to dedicate time in one session, particularly to word meaning instruction (Personal communication, September 12, 2013). Another aspect of the teachers' practice that may have influenced proportions of vocabulary related discussion was the choice of books themselves. The teachers of younger students both indicated that they felt that the levelled Big Books that they used for shared reading often had limited vocabulary, and therefore provided limited opportunities to discuss words that their children may not have come across before (Teacher One, personal communication, September 12, 2013; Teacher Two, personal communication, September 12, 2013). Teacher Three on the other hand said that she specifically sought books which provided rich language that she could use to extend knowledge about word meanings (Personal communication, September 26, 2013).

There is a lack of specific details in Ministry of Education (2003) guidelines about shared reading concerning the proportion of instruction teachers should allocate to supporting vocabulary development. It is possible that more explicit discussions about the significance of vocabulary instruction during shared reading in Ministry of Education literature and during

teacher's professional development might provide more consistency of practice in this area than was evident in this study. Further research into this area might involve surveying teachers regarding their perceptions about the proportions of time they allocate to vocabulary during shared reading and their beliefs about the priority of vocabulary instruction within their shared reading programme. Although this would provide information pertaining to teachers' perceptions rather than the more objective data that observations provide, the opportunity to survey large numbers of teachers would give a broader picture of practices in schools.

Facilitating multiple exposures to key words by repeated readings and discussion

Research has shown that repeated exposures to new words, by hearing them read and seeing them in shared texts, can be beneficial to word learning (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; McLeod & McDade, 2011; Sénéchal, 1997). The practice of the teachers in the present study concurred with the findings of these studies. Three out of four of the teachers in the present study consistently provided multiple exposures to words by repeated reading of the texts over successive sessions. In general, teachers read texts once during each shared reading session apart from two occasions when Teacher One read the text twice during one shared reading session. As key words often occur multiple times in a text, this meant that selected words may be encountered many times over the course of a series of readings (see Table 17). When asked about their general shared reading practice during their interviews, Teachers One, Two and Three all indicated that repeated reading of text was a part of their practice. Teacher Four had a broader conception of shared reading, indicating that it may also involve incidental one-off joint reading occasions. Her practice tended to reflect this. Apart from Teacher Four's practice, there were no significant differences between the number of repeated readings conducted with older and younger learners.

Research by Beck and McKeown (2007) and Biemiller and Boote (2006) has shown that repeated interactive reviews of word meanings was also an effective way to support vocabulary knowledge during shared reading.

The teachers in the current study all provided repeated exposures to selected words in addition to reading the text (see Table 17). This practice tended to happen in two ways, either by providing extended explanations and elaborations of selected words on one occasion, or by revisiting and revising words on subsequent days.

For example, Teacher One chose to target selected words intensively in specific sessions. These words were elaborated on more extensively as part of shared reading discussions. For example, the word ‘barn’ occurred naturally 10 times during reading and occurred 10 times during discussion outside of reading, during one session. Teacher One indicated that she preferred a shared reading format that involved focusing on word meanings primarily in one session. She said that following this approach reassured her that she was covering all aspects of shared reading during the series (Teacher One, personal communication, September 12, 2013). Teacher Two also tended to provide multiple exposures to specific words, beyond reading them, in the course of single sessions.

In addition to repeated exposures via reading and explanations, Teacher Three also provided multiple interactive revisions of target words on subsequent days. This practice most closely parallels that shown by Beck and McKeown (2007) and Biemiller and Boote (2006) as an effective means of securing a broad knowledge of words. Typically, Teacher Three would return to selected target words each day of the shared text series to revise them. The following provides an example of Teacher Three’s comprehensive approach to revision:

Excellent I was just about to ask that. L said it’s about the bubbles being whisked away and we learnt about what the word whisk was. So was the word whisk like I need to go whisk some eggs? Who can remember what the word whisk meant? I read you the definition out of the dictionary. What does the word whisk mean?
C?

(Response)

To blow away. Good. I like how you’ve summed that up quickly. A, what do you think the word whisk means?

(Response)

I think that's pretty much what the dictionary said. So you've remembered the definition 'to move it from one place to another quickly.' And, C he just remembers it means to move it away which is the same. So what type of word class was the word whisk? B?

(Response)

A verb excellent. Who can remember what a verb is? What's a verb? N. (Personal communication, September 26, 2013)

It is worth noting that Teacher Three's initial explanations and revisions include instruction about multiple aspects of target words. She encourages active processing through non-eliciting questioning, she provides context information by recasting the word in an alternative sentence, she reiterates the definition and she elicits metalinguistic information. This practice concurs with both the Biemiller and Boote (2006) and the Beck and McKeown (2007) studies where repeated interactions about words involved discussing definitional, contextual and metalinguistic information. In these studies, teachers posted words on word walls as well as including them in alternative contexts, such as daily notices. These practices were replicated by Teacher Three with her use of the word wall and in the way she encouraged use of target words in children's writing. When asked about how she uses texts to reinforce word meanings Teacher Three stated:

... I will refer back to it. And maybe I'll pick out the word that we're focusing on. Like today we did sanctuary. I'll ask them, you know: what do they think about this word. Let them know if they're near or that they've got the idea of it so that they know if they're on the right path. And then I tend to get a dictionary because I like them to, I want them to know that if there's ever a word you're not sure of, always get a dictionary and find that meaning. To really understand what's happening. And then after that I'll read it and then I'll ask them again. What does that word mean to you? And then I'll go back to the text, so that they can make all those connections. (Personal communication, September 26, 2013)

When asked about her practice of revising words Teacher Three said:

S – The revision is really just to help consolidate that knowledge. When you learn something new if it isn't consolidated it's quite easy to use. So that's why I always go back to it. And then on top of that I put the word on the leaves, which is on the vocabulary vine, which is on the classroom. So that they can always, you know like, and they do, they'll talk and "do you remember that day that we did ...

do you remember that word ... that word, you know," they'll just chatter to themselves and they'll say, "oh remember that" and you know. (Personal communication, September 26, 2013)

This illustrates Teacher Three's overarching belief that her students required intensive instruction about words that involved revision and practise using the words. This concurs with conclusions drawn by Biemiller and Boote (2006) who suggest that intensive and repeated instruction about words in the context of shared reading is required to secure significant vocabulary gains for young children. Teacher Three's practice concurs with the intensive strategies used in Beck and McKeown's (2007) successful intervention study where teachers were encouraged to reiterate how words were used in the text, provide explanations, provide and elicit recasts and judgements about words in alternative contexts and continue to revisit words for up to five days.

As with the section on proportions of shared reading dedicated to vocabulary instruction, the understandings gained in the current research regarding the number of exposures teachers are providing about words during shared reading could be extended by surveying a wider group of teachers regarding this aspect of their practice. A survey that sought information about the number of times teachers read shared texts and information about instructional practices related to specific words would provide a broader picture about practices in this area.

Timing of vocabulary instruction in relation to reading texts

The question of when to conduct vocabulary instruction is affected by the two distinct reasons for providing information about words during reading: to facilitate understanding of the text being shared, and to secure robust vocabulary development (Beck & McKeown, 2008). Research by Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) supports the hypothesis that instruction that occurs in close proximity to the context in which a word occurs is most effective. Unfortunately, the kind of extended and interactive instruction that is effective to help students to consolidate word knowledge can be

cumbersome when conducted prior to or during reading. Beck and McKeown (2008) suggest that teachers clarify word meanings providing brief explanations during or prior to reading so as not to unnecessarily interrupt the flow of the text (and affect students' comprehension of the primary ideas being presented). Beck and McKeown (2008) suggest that extended instruction to consolidate word knowledge takes place after reading. Therefore a balanced process of word explanation and instruction before, during and after reading may be appropriate during shared reading sessions.

The teachers in the current study had varied approaches regarding this practice. Teachers One and Three both tended to provide instruction before or after reading and rarely during reading (see Table 18). Teachers Two and Four provided balanced vocabulary instruction before, during and after reading texts (see Table 18). During their interviews, all the teachers were asked how they approached the timing of their vocabulary support. Teacher One indicated that although she did not have a particular approach she believed that discussing the word in close relation to the text was important (Personal communication, September 12, 2013). Teacher Three indicated that she also did not have a clear format as she felt that varying her approach each day kept her discussions fresh for the students (Personal communication, September 26, 2013). Teacher Four indicated that she tended to identify key words and discuss them beforehand to enhance comprehension and then extend understanding after reading (Personal communication, September 26, 2013). Teacher Two indicated that she preferred to introduce language as she went through a reading (Personal communication, September 12, 2013).

All the teachers in the current study believed that shared reading was an ideal context within which to learn and extend understanding of new vocabulary as it provided an opportunity to provide instruction in relation to words in a text context, rather than learning them in isolation. In their interviews, the teachers were asked how they go about selecting words to target for additional explanation and instruction. Teachers indicated that they previewed texts and identified words that they believed students may

not understand and that provided an opportunity for further instruction. A clearer delineation of the distinction between a text's key words and peripheral words that may provide opportunities for more general vocabulary development may be a useful refinement to their shared reading practice.

The teachers in the current study varied significantly in relation to the timing of their vocabulary instruction. Because of the small sample in this study it is difficult to gain a picture of a consistent pattern of practice regarding this aspect of shared reading. Observations of a wider sample of teachers may provide a clearer picture of this characteristic of support for vocabulary development.

Texts used by teachers

According to Cunningham (2005), opportunities for learning new vocabulary are enhanced when children have a reasonable general understanding of the text being read. Beck and McKeown (2008) suggest that understanding of words can be supported by selecting texts that are a good match for the student's prior knowledge. Van Kleeck (2003) suggests adults consider three key characteristics of books when selecting texts for sharing: genre, familiarity and complexity. Van Kleeck (2003) recommends consideration about how different genres may foster different kinds of learning, how increased familiarity with books can enhance comprehension and how well a text matches the children's zone of proximal development.

The teachers fell into two groups in relation to book selection. Teachers One and Two (teachers of younger learners) both choose to use narrative Big Books, which they read multiple times. During their interview, these teachers indicated that their choice of text for shared reading was directed by a school protocol that required them to choose from a selection of Big Books allocated to their class's year level. This restricted their choices somewhat but ensured that texts related to the children's reading ages. Teachers Three and Four (teachers of older learners) chose to share a

more diverse range of texts. Teacher Three chose poems exclusively. During her interview, Teacher Three indicated that she preferred poems as they could be read rapidly and they contained rich language that she valued as providing an opportunity for extending her student's vocabulary. Teacher Four used texts from a range of genres, including both narrative, poetic and exposition. During her interview, Teacher Four indicated that she chose books from a range of sources. Her primary criteria was making sure that her students could relate to and engage with the material in the text.

When asked about their criteria for book selection during their interview all the teachers indicated student prior knowledge and the ability of their students to relate to the subject matter were primary considerations when choosing a book to share.

It is worth noting that the small sample of teachers' practice in this study means that it is difficult to gain a consistent picture of the characteristics of their practice. The current research might be extended by surveying a larger sample of teachers about the book choices they are making for shared reading and their perceptions about the opportunities for vocabulary development that these provide. The increasing availability of online texts and display technologies in classrooms also offers opportunities for research regarding teacher's knowledge and up take of these resources and their perceptions about the efficacy of online texts for shared reading and vocabulary development.

Setting and teacher profiles (from questionnaire data)

Biemiller and Boote (2006) and Beck and McKeown (2008) suggest that vocabulary instruction that involves interactions between teachers and students is an effective means by which teachers can help students to secure word meanings. The classes observed in the current study ranged in size from 14 to 22. The teachers in the current study were observed conducting shared reading with their whole class group. Larger group sizes may present a challenge for teachers to engage in interactions to

support vocabulary development. Teacher Two commented on the difficulty of conducting adequate discussions about words with a whole class group:

Yeah, I mean, there's a lot of value in doing that. But you see you're doing that on a small scale with the group work anyway, which is so much more manageable. I suppose I look at how many children, I can see one out of the corner of my eye, I can see ones who are on another planet, ones that are disrupting and all that. It just makes me not enjoy it because, I just feel that there's only a small group that are actually getting benefit from it. (Personal communication, September 12, 2013)

In her interview, Teacher One indicated that she felt that shared reading may provide an instructional context in which children who are not confident about word knowledge can experience words vicariously:

I think that for the shared book it's good for some children that don't want to share or don't actually understand it so it makes it safe for them, so that they can hear the vocab without um, sort of being put on the spot. (Personal communication, September 12, 2013)

The teachers in the current study were all degree qualified, registered and experienced teachers. They had a range of experience at the level they were teaching when observed. Only one of the teachers had recently attended a course that had provided information about vocabulary teaching. Survey research into the knowledge about and course attended related to vocabulary teaching would provide a useful picture of professional knowledge in this area.

Part 2: Avenues for Learning Words and Instructional Methods Utilised to Facilitate Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading

The results of this part of the study will be discussed under the four areas introduced in Chapter 3: providing definitional information; providing context information; facilitating active processing; and providing metalinguistic information.

Providing definitional information

Research suggests that acquiring definitional information is a key way in which students can secure knowledge about word meanings (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Brett et al., 1996; McKeown & Beck, 2004; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). All the teachers in the current study utilised this avenue for learning words to support the vocabulary development of their students during shared reading. Along with encouraging active processing (31%), the provision of definitional information was the most utilised avenue for learning words utilised by these teachers (31%) across the four teachers. Beck and McKeown (2008) suggest that teachers use a range of methods for conveying definitional information to encourage students to make various connections to known words and concepts. The teachers in the study used a range of methods of conveying explanations.

Teacher Two utilised the provision of definitional information most often as a way to support vocabulary learning during her observed shared reading sessions. She used a wide range of explanation methods, including explanations using personal experiences, gestures, mini dramas as well as labelling images in the shared text by pointing to them and showing additional images of key nouns on her projector screen. Her comprehensive approach to vocabulary explanations is characterised by this personal explanation of a kangaroo. Here she first conveyed to the students her experience of visiting her sister in Australia and sitting watching the wild wallabies in her sister's back yard, and then relates this to an explanation of a kangaroo:

...when I would sit on her deck in the morning with my cup of tea I'd hear this: thump, thump, thump. And I'd go, Oh! And there were some wallabies. And wallabies stand about that high from the ground to their head and they have got two big legs and they jump, thump, thump, thump ... No I'm not going to show you on there (the screen) I'm just going to tell you so you can think about it in your head ... It's like a small sort of kangaroo. So kangaroos are really tall they're about that tall, and they've got quite a big pouch... (Teacher Two, observation, August, 2013)

She later reinforced the concept and the relationship between wallabies and kangaroos by showing images of both.

Beck and McKeown (2008) encourage the use of personal language and agents in explanations as a way of providing an affective dimension to concepts that help students remember words and establish connections to other concepts and words. All the teachers in the study utilised this strategy to some degree: “So some people are scared (*of mice*). Some people like them. I don’t mind looking at them but I don’t like touching them. I don’t want to touch them” (Teacher One, observation, August 5, 2013).

And:

Did you know that we actually have a tui that sometimes is around our school? You’ll hear it sometimes, normally in the afternoon, and it likes to sometimes sit up on the soccer goal over there. Or over by C Block. (Teacher Three, observation, September 9, 2013)

And:

... and I thought, the bridge that I see every morning doesn’t actually cross a river, it goes across a railway line. So that the cars can go over and the trains can go under. And then I thought oh, another bridge I go over, I’m going across the highway. I’m above the cars, and there’s cars going underneath. So bridges do go across rivers, but they also go across other things. (Teacher Four, observation, September 23, 2013)

Teacher Two also used materials extensively in one session. To support understanding of the words ‘wool’ and ‘spinning’ and ‘shearing’ that were related to a shared text, Teacher Two shared some actual wool, sheep shears and a spindle which the children were able to hold and discuss (Observation, September 11, 2013). The means of providing definitions is supported by Beck and McKeown (2008), who suggest that such experiences provide rich affective experiences to reinforce concepts.

Teacher Two’s comprehensive explanations are an indication of her opinion, as discussed in her interview, that she believed that conversation was the optimum way of developing vocabulary: “This business of developing vocabulary, I think, for me it’s, um, conversation is the greatest

vocabulary development, more than just, just, the set formalised text reading” (Personal communication, September 12, 2013).

Teacher One also provided definitional information in a range of ways. She used images from the text extensively as well as materials and personal experience. Her explanations often only provided essential information before moving on so as to minimise interruptions to reading the text, such as in this instance where she is labelling an illustration of a barn: “Sometimes in New Zealand we call it a shed. But in lots of other countries we call it a barn” (Observation, August 5, 2013).

This practice is supported by research by Biemiller and Boote (2006) who used brief explanations as part of their intervention study to support vocabulary development during shared reading. They suggest that brief explanations such those used by Teacher One are an effective way of supporting vocabulary development for large groups when extensive discussion may not be feasible and when paired with repeated exposures to words.

Both teachers of younger students (Teachers One and Two) carried out an extensive ‘picture walks’ (Clay, 1991) prior to reading that involved discussing various features of the text and making predictions about the narrative and characters. They also used this as an occasion to reinforce key vocabulary that would occur in the story. Stahl and Nagy (2006) suggest that picture flicks are a useful way of building information about words before reading begins. In their interviews, both these teachers indicated that because of the spread of language and literacy ability in their groups, they believed that it was important to introduce students to the language in the texts through discussion reading but at the same time not spend too much time talking about it.

Teacher Three utilised definitional information frequently (26%). Her use of definitions is characterised by her regular use of them throughout the series of sessions on each text; rather than focusing explanations about words in one or two sessions, Teacher Three provided explanations in

every session. As with the other teachers in this study, Teacher Three used a range of means to convey explanations, including using images, personal experience, gestures and drama, dictionary definitions and revising and refining explanations offered by students. Teacher Three used a dictionary regularly to provide formal definitions of target words that have been read in the text. She modelled use of the dictionary by looking up specific words that had occurred in the text and providing an explicit commentary (think aloud) on the processes. She also encouraged individual students to look up words in student dictionaries as part of shared reading sessions. Although dictionary definitions were generally provided after reading the text, all the texts were short poems so definitions remained proximal to hearing the words in context. Teacher Three's use of dictionary definitions corresponds with Stahl and Nagy's (2006) suggestion that dictionary definitions should be modelled and used in authentic circumstances rather than in isolated exercises. Beck and McKeown (2008) also suggest the use of the 'think aloud' technique to model dictionary use.

In her interview, Teacher Three stated that she used the dictionary because she wanted her students to learn to use it as a reliable resource for learning word meanings independently. She says: "And then I tend to get a dictionary because I like them to ... I want them to know that if there's ever a word you're not sure of, always get a dictionary and find that meaning" (Personal communication, September 26, 2013).

Teacher Three's provision of definitional information was also characterised by the way she regularly engaged in refinements of word meanings during discussions. In this way she was able to add additional information to word meanings in a staggered way throughout the lesson and build understanding in stages. As Beck and McKeown (2008) suggest, formal definitions can be difficult for students to understand and revisions and refinements in personal language can add significantly to their understanding. This is exemplified in her explanations of the word 'whisk'. After reading a formal dictionary definition that had two possible definitions she says:

You know that, um, the beater that has a long stick and kinda looks a little bit like a hot air balloon with little pieces of wire yeah? Some people call it an egg beater, some people call it a whisk. So there are two meanings for the word whisk. So we're not talking about, we're not talking about beating eggs or making cream are we? So we want this one to make a quick sweeping movement, quick sweeping movement (makes a sweeping gesture). (Observation, August 19, 2013)

During her interview, Teacher Three was asked about her practice of revising words. She stated that she believed that it was important to consolidate new knowledge to help students to apply new knowledge. She said that she generally revised target words with students to help them to make connections between dictionary meanings and words in the text. Teacher Four also used a range of modes to provide definitional information, including images, gestures, dictionary definitions and revising and refining word meanings. She used images and made refinements to word meanings most often. Teacher Four was the only teacher in the study to share a non-fiction text. To support her students understanding of the technical language in the text, she used the images in the text extensively as well as conveying personal experience as part of explanations prior to reading. She also used images on a large computer screen to support understanding. In her interview, Teacher Four said that she liked to use images as she found that they engaged her students: "Yeah, so I can use good old YouTube and google images are good for showing kids. And I quite often ... because the TV engages them, they're used to looking at the TV so they like looking at things" (Personal communication, September 26, 2013).

Teacher Four said she only occasionally used dictionaries as she found that often either the information may be either inadequate or the language used too complex. She said:

Very occasionally we'll get a dictionary but the trouble with the dictionaries is that quite often the junior dictionaries do not have the hard words that are in the books. Or they'll give you a definition that is gobbledygook to the kids. They don't understand it. So yeah, I like having a dictionary that gives the kids a word with a sentence in it so they've got a context. (Personal communication, September 26, 2013)

Stahl and Nagy (2006) agree with Teacher Four's concerns about the limitations of student dictionaries, saying that limitations on length and complexity can mean inadequate information is provided. Beck and McKeown (2008) suggest that dictionary definitions that provide an explanation of words in sentences are most effective because they concurrently provide a context for words as well as explanations.

Providing context information

Providing context information helps students to cement understanding of words by helping them to make connections to known words and concepts (Beck & McKeown, 2008; Biemiller, 2005; McLeod & McDade, 2011; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). All the teachers in this study used this strategy to some degree. Providing context information was the third most used way of securing word knowledge utilised during shared reading (25%) across all teachers. Experiencing new words in context is a process that happens naturally during shared reading as children hear and view novel words as teachers read to them. There is significant evidence to support the idea that children can learn some new word meanings in this way (Elley, 1989; McLeod & McDade, 2011; Robbins & Ehri, 1994). However, teachers can provide additional contextual experiences of words, in addition to formal reading of texts, by providing associated words (often as part of discussions) and by recasting words in new sentences (Beck & McKeown, 2008; Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

For teachers of younger students, providing context information was the second most used way of learning words utilised on average. Teacher One used this strategy most often (38%) in relation to the other strategies she used to support vocabulary development. She most often provided contextual information outside of formal reading by providing associated words, such as synonyms and antonyms, during discussion about words. For example, during a discussion about the word 'big' she discussed multiple associated words such as medium, small, tiny and giant. These related words were plotted on a T-chart to provide a visual representation of their relationships to each other. The words were revised the following

day (using the T-chart) and another group of associated words were generated (see Figure 15), including little, humongous, ginormous and gigantic (Observation, August 6, 2013). Teacher One also recast words in a new sentence to reinforce connections.

Mouse	
barn \square	Help
duck	cow
big	small
humungous	tiny
giant	little
ginormous	
gigantic	
biggest	
	!exclamation mark

Figure 15: Associated words T-Chart – Teacher One

When Teacher One was asked about using words in context during her interview she indicated that she believed hearing words in the context of the text was a significant contributor to learning them; she said that although she also taught word meanings in isolation, that this was not sufficient. She said:

But you need to have both, and connecting it back so if you've done a day that is mainly a vocab, high frequency words, then to put it in a sentence, that they can use it. It's those high interest words they

remember but they don't necessarily recognise in the story.
(Personal communication, September 12, 2013)

Teacher Two used this avenue for learning words less often (22%). As with Teacher One, Teacher Two provided context information (in addition to formal reading of the text) primarily by providing associated words; she also recast words in a sentence. In one example, Teacher Two manages to combine elements of both these techniques while providing multiple associated to help build the concept of a goat's coat, a key word in the story. She says: "The little goat lost its jacket and the birds got it," then shortly after: "It's its fur ... it's its coat. Ok so the story might be about the little goat's furry coat" (Observation, September 9, 2013).

Here Teacher Two repeated the target words (goat's coat) several times in association with several related words (jacket, fur, furry) as well as recasting elements of text at the same time.

In discussion about vocabulary support strategies, Teacher Two said that she liked to remain open to introducing new words that may be generated by their association with words that come up in the text. She said:

Yes and lots of questions come up so that's the chance to develop it. And also I'll ask a question and they can actually contribute and then I might be telling them things like moulting and shearing and words that they probably haven't heard of. But that always starts a whole new conversation. (Personal communication, September 12, 2013)

Teacher Three also used this technique of weaving associated words into discussions about key words found in shared texts. In discussing the word 'whisk' from a poem she manages to introduce nine associated verbs, including take, blow, quick, sweeping, movement, beat, whip, blown and drags, as well as providing several other associated words: blown, cloudy and bubbles. In addition to this, she recasts the target word in a sentence with synonyms: "So the wind comes along and it blows it goes along the sea and it takes those little bubbles and drags it away ... well whisks, whisks it away" (Observation, August 19, 2013).

On another occasion in discussion about the word 'commotion' she introduces the seven associated words: violent, disturbance, agitation, upheaval, moving, noise and excitement. She also recasts the word in the sentence: "The kids were causing, we need that word causing, a commotion because they had nothing to do" (Teacher Three, observation, September 16, 2013).

These examples illustrate Teacher Three's characteristically intensive instruction in relation to target words and her commitment to exposing her students to new vocabulary whenever the opportunity presents itself. In her interview she says: "So it's about actually opening them up to a large bank of vocabulary. And not only getting them to read them but to understand them and be able to use them ... what meaning they sort of have in a sentence..." (Personal communication, September 26, 2013). And: "They need to be exposed, you know, to different words. Instead of saying um, "I'm hungry", saying, "I'm starving". You know, just different words that they could use, instead of using the same old words again and again" (Personal communication, September 26, 2013).

Teacher Four also utilised the provision of context information often to facilitate word learning. She also provided associated intensively on occasion. In her discussion about the target word 'camouflage' she uses 13 associated words, including colouring, covering, hide, blends, hideout, disguise, concealment, mask, cover, obscure, conceal and cover-up. She also recasts words in new sentences: "We camouflaged our hideout, so that it would be really hard to see" (Observation, September 24, 2013).

During her interview, Teacher Four was asked about the part providing words in context played in her practice and about how she justified spending time on individual words. She indicates that she believed that experiencing words in context was an important part of securing knowledge of them. She says: "I'm trying to make it so that it's holistic, it's not just one little word used in isolation and never used again" (Personal communication, September 26, 2013). And:

I think that if they've learnt it in isolation, then you integrate back into the shared reading or the writing or whatever, then you're reinforcing it. It's weaving it in. So hopefully something might be going in and staying there. (Teacher Four, personal communication, September 26, 2013)

Experiencing new words in context is a process that happens naturally during shared reading as children hear and view novel words as teachers read to them. There is significant evidence to support the idea that children can learn some new word meanings in this way (Elley, 1989; McLeod & McDade, 2011; Robbins & Ehri, 1994). However, teachers can provide additional contextual experiences of words, in addition to formal reading of texts, by providing associated words (often as part of discussions), and by recasting words in new sentences (Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

The teachers in this study often introduced contextual information during introductory discussions about texts. An interesting additional aspect of this process is the way that the processes involved in providing additional contextual information about key words may have helped teachers to avoid the pitfalls of what Stahl and Nagy (2006) term 'bird walking'. Bird walking refers to the practice of discussing concepts during the introduction of a text that are tangential to the main ideas and that can actually detract from comprehension for young readers (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). It is possible that adhering to relevant associations between words that are considered important to text comprehension during introductory discussions about texts helped these teachers to avoid such pitfalls.

Facilitating active processing

Research indicates that facilitating active cognitive processing by encouraging students to engage in active thinking and discussion about new words helps to secure and consolidate word knowledge (Beck & McKeown, 2007; Beck & McKeown, 2008; Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Sénéchal, 1997; Stahl, 2005; Stahl & Nagy, 2006; Walsh & Rose, 2013). All the teachers in the present study facilitated active processing to support the development of

vocabulary knowledge during shared reading. Along with the provision of definitional information, facilitating active processing was the most used avenue to learning words utilised, across all teachers. Teachers of older students used this strategy proportionally more often than teachers of younger students.

Teacher One utilised this avenue for learning words regularly but less often than providing explanations and context information. Her primary method of facilitating active processing was by asking her students questions about vocabulary items that required them to include the target word as part of their answer (eliciting questions). She also elicited word use directly and as a drama. Teacher One's questioning was characterised by significant scaffolding using the text's illustrations and by providing associated information to encourage students to focus in on the target word: "They are on a farm but I wonder what the building's called. The farm is where all the animals and the paddocks are. But does anyone know what this thing's called? It's a building on a farm" (Observation, August 5, 2013).

Teacher Two also elicited word use by encouraging students to represent words dramatically. To reinforce concepts after an extensive discussion about the words 'big' and 'small' she asked the children to role play being a mouse and a human character from the shared text to illustrate comparative sizes (Observation, August 6, 2013). Beck and McKeown (2008) recommend using alternative modes of processing vocabulary concepts such as this to reinforce new knowledge.

During her interview, Teacher One also discussed how she uses vocabulary related questioning as a method of formative assessment. In the following response she describes a cohesive process of weaving formative assessment and eliciting questioning together to both establish target words and support the development of new knowledge:

Sometimes you get the blank looks that: "I don't know what you mean by that."...Yep you can see the eyes and they're sort of like — you know you can tell they don't get what you're saying. So it's

like I need to think a different way. So that's when I ... you know if it was a road thing ... It's not a road what could it be called? What do you expect it could be? What do you call it? And then you get their knowledge of the world. (Personal communication, September 12, 2013)

In her interview Teacher One also outlines her opinion of the benefits of discussion about words during shared reading for both able and less able learners:

I think that for the shared book it's good for some children that don't want to share or don't actually understand it so it makes it safe for them, so that they can hear the vocab without um, sort of being put on the spot. (Personal communication, September 12, 2013)

Teacher Two also utilised active processing less often than providing definitions and context information. She used similar proportions of eliciting and non-eliciting questions as a means to facilitate active processing during shared reading. She used text based illustrations often to support her questioning and discussion. During her interview, Teacher Two indicated that she believed that whole class shared reading was not the best place to engage in substantial discussions about words because of the number of students. She said that she preferred to undertake discussions about vocabulary in reading groups because smaller groups facilitated better learning (Teacher Two, personal communication, September 12, 2013).

Teacher Four also used active processing relatively often in relation to other strategies. As with Teachers One and Two, she also primarily used eliciting questions in discussions about words. Teacher Four often used questions as a process of revision and knowledge checking. Questioning about words more often occurred after reading texts and discussions about target words had occurred. As with Teachers One and Two, Teacher Four used illustrations to scaffold questioning.

Walsh and Blewitt's (2006) study found that asking questions about target words was an effective way of encouraging children to process new vocabulary and improved word learning. They found that there was no

significant difference in the effects of asking eliciting and non-eliciting questions. However, the Walsh and Blewitt (2006) study was conducted with children from middle and upper socio-economic households. In a study of slightly older children from lower socio-economic households Walsh and Rose (2013) found that there was significantly more positive benefit gained from providing the target in the question. Walsh and Rose (2013) suggest that providing the target word provides scaffolding for students with lower levels of vocabulary to help them to secure understandings of new words. The teachers in the current study were all teaching students from lower socio-economic households. Teachers One, Two and Three tended to use mostly eliciting questions that may provide sufficient information for their students to optimise learning. Having said this, all these teachers employed alternative means of scaffolding questioning, including picture support, and providing associated words in questions and discussions leading up to questions.

Teacher Three used active processing significantly more than other avenues for learning words to support vocabulary development during shared reading. Teacher Three also used non-eliciting questions as her primary means of encouraging active processing; she also used some eliciting questions and directly elicited word use at times. Teacher Three's shared reading sessions were characterised by intensive and extended discussions about target words whereby information about target words was woven into exchanges often as part of revising words after explanations had been provided earlier. A typical question involved the provision of significant associated information to scaffold processing. For example, for the target word 'wily' that had already been discussed, synonyms as well as the target word were provided in the question: "Crafty, sly and sneaky. And we talked about how a fox is probably wily. Ok C. So C can you tell me what does the word wily mean?" (Observation, August 22, 2013).

Likewise the compound word 'seawards' is chunked into components to provide additional information:

Seawards. It's kind of like backwards. Sea...wards. Well first of all what's it got to do with? K? The sea. Ok, so we've established what it's to do with — the sea. What do you think that word might mean. Seaward. What do you think this might mean? (Teacher Four, observation, August 22, 2013)

In discussing the methods she used to support vocabulary in her interview, Teacher Three said that she tried to provide a context in which students felt comfortable to express their ideas about words and that she tried to elicit active engagement from them in discussions. She says:

I'll ask (*about their*) prior knowledge. I'll ask them to bring to the table what they think. I encourage them to say, it doesn't matter if it's wrong. You're just getting a feeling like, sometimes, just like if we hear a word that we're not sure of, we can still get a feeling for what we think it may mean. And that's also what I want the kids to do so that they build on it. And that also draws them into, I think, understanding the vocab a lot better. (Personal communication, September 26, 2013)

Teacher Three's questioning technique goes beyond the recommendations of Walsh and Rose (2013) to include target words in questions. By providing additional associated words and metalinguistic information, Teacher Three is providing a broad platform to support students in making inferences when constructing responses to questions and optimising their chances of successful estimates about word meanings as well as helping them to build a comprehensive context to secure word meanings in their memory.

Providing metalinguistic information

Providing information about the functions of words in sentences and modelling and discussing how to make intentional analysis of words based on their components can help children to learn how to develop the skills to decipher word meanings when reading independently (Nicholson & Dymock, 2010; Pressley, 2006; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Although all the teachers in the present study provided metalinguistic information at some point, this was by far the least utilised avenue for learning words utilised during the observed shared reading sessions. Teachers of younger

students utilised the provision of metalinguistic information proportionally less often than teachers of older students.

When asked about her methods of providing metalinguistic information during her interview, Teacher One indicated that she believed that she preferred to discuss the metalinguistic features of words only if they were significant to the text. She also said that she believed that young children did not benefit from learning to use metalinguistic terminology (such as the term 'plural') and that in fact the use of these terms by teachers may be confusing for this age level (Teacher One, personal communication, September 12, 2013). This is exemplified by her discussion of the plural of mouse:

What do we call them, cause this is when some people get a little bit confused. When we've got ... this is one mouse ... some people say ...' cause I heard them say the other day. What do we say. Do we say that we've got t—here's one mouse and here are two ...?

(response)

Oh, well we don't say mouses, it does seem like we should R. Close. We say two mice.

So we have one mouse and we have two mice.

See they both start the same. (Teacher One, observation, August 8, 2013)

Teacher One also used images and words on the whiteboard to scaffold understanding of metalinguistic information, as shown in Figure 16.

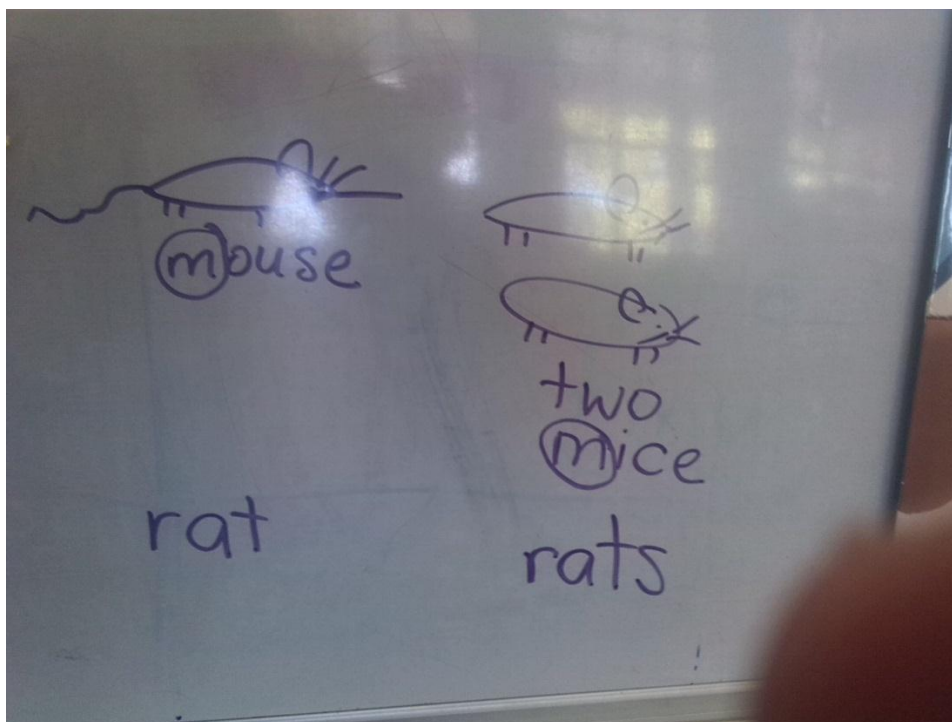


Figure 16: Using images and words to reinforce metalinguistic information – Teacher One

Teacher Three provided and discussed metalinguistic information less often in comparison to other avenues for learning words but more than other teachers in the present study. Teacher Three's vocabulary instruction during shared reading was complemented by a vocabulary support programme run in conjunction with her writing programme. This involved displaying selected words and on a word wall, as well as having children complete an analysis sheet for selected words that included Elkonin boxes and analysis of the word class. Teacher Three referred to the word wall and word class lists regularly during shared reading.

During her interview, Teacher Three described how she sought to use the shared reading context to focus and extend understanding of features of at least one word per week, focusing on different aspects, such as word class, on different days (Personal communication, September 26, 2013). She also stated that she believed that it was important that her students had a deeper understanding of words than simply being able to recognise it in the current context. She says:

And not only getting them to read them but to understand them and be able to use them ... what meaning they sort of have in a

sentence, if it's a verb or a noun or a because then they'll understand where to put that word in a sentence if they choose to use it. (Teacher Three, personal communication, September 26, 2013)

Teacher Three's practice in this area concurs with Beck and McKeown's (2007) finding that more intensive vocabulary instruction, which involves encouraging students to develop a broad based knowledge of a word (beyond synonyms and context specific knowledge), will help them to apply their knowledge of that word in a wider variety of contexts. Beck and McKeown's (2007) study suggests that Teacher Three's practice of providing and discussing metalinguistic information about target words could be replicated by other teachers and possibly extended to form a larger portion of her vocabulary support strategy repertoire. Beck and McKeown (2007) also suggest that students with a limited vocabulary also tend to have a narrower knowledge of words and as such may benefit from the provision and discussion of more information.

Although all the teachers in the current study provided and discussed metalinguistic information it is worth noting that this avenue for supporting vocabulary development was used on average much less than other avenues, and varied considerably between teachers. It is possible that the proportionally low incidence and variability in the teachers' provision and discussion of metalinguistic information in the current study is a reflection of their confidence and general knowledge in this area. Recent research in New Zealand has indicated that aspects of teachers' levels of language knowledge may vary considerably (Carroll, 2006). Other authors point out that although many adults may be accomplished users of language they may not have a comprehensive knowledge of the components that make up language (Moats, 2010; Nicholson, 2007). In order to increase the proportion of the provision of metalinguistic knowledge in relation to the other avenues for learning vocabulary, there may be a case for increasing the amount of teacher pre-service and in-service professional development of language knowledge.

This section has discussed the avenues for learning words and instructional methods to support vocabulary development that teachers utilised during shared reading. This study was designed to undertake an in depth examination of an aspect of a small sample of teacher's practice. It is worth noting that the small sample of participant's in this study means that it is difficult to gain a consistent picture of the of their practice. This research could be extended in a variety of ways. Firstly, a semi-structured interview of a larger sample of teachers that explored their knowledge, practices and beliefs about vocabulary instruction during shared reading would yield a more comprehensive representation of practice in the field. Interviews could also be conducted across various groups (e.g., junior, senior and secondary) to explore comparative practices at different levels. Another approach might be to undertake action research in one school or a cluster of schools that involved professional development related to avenues to learning words and teachers' instructional methods to support vocabulary. This may be paired with pre- and post-testing of general vocabulary levels in groups of pupils before and after professional development. A critical action research approach might explore the benefits of teacher professional development in relation to techniques that provide explicit instruction to support vocabulary development during shared reading for children from lower socio-economic areas who arrive at school with low levels of vocabulary.

Part 3: Distinctions Between the Characteristics of Shared Reading Practice and Instructional Methods Utilised by Teachers of Younger Junior Classes and Those of Older Junior Classes in Relation to Facilitating Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading

Research that has included comparisons between younger and older groups of children when looking at the efficacy of different approaches to supporting vocabulary during shared reading has produced mixed results. Biemiller and Boote (2006) found that younger children benefitted from repeated exposures to words through hearing them read more than older children. On the other hand, Biemiller and Boote (2006) found that older children benefitted more from additional discussion about words that

included reading the words more than younger children. Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) also found that older students benefitted more from increased interactions about words than younger children. More research that makes comparisons between groups of older and younger students would illuminate this relationship better; however, from Biemiller and Boote's (2006) and Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown's (2002) research it can be tentatively concluded that younger students will benefit from repeated exposures to words in shared texts with some interactions about words, and older learners would benefit less from additional readings but more from interactional instruction about words, especially if it included reading target words.

The teachers of younger students in the current study read slightly more often than the teachers of older students but provided slightly less exposures to specific words over and above reading them. Conversely the teachers of older students read texts slightly less but provided slightly more interactions about words. These differences were not overly significant across all the teachers. However, when comparing the shared reading practice of individual teachers of different ages, a different picture emerges. Teacher One (Year 0) spent more than the average (22.64 %) amount of time on vocabulary instruction (37%), whereas Teacher Three (Year 3–4) spent more than double the average amount (50.16 %). This corresponds with these teachers' statements regarding vocabulary instruction in their shared reading programme with Teacher One stating that she generally set aside one session (approximately 25%) of her shared reading sessions to discuss vocabulary (Personal communication, September 12, 2013). Teacher Three stated that she believed that her students required intensive vocabulary instruction (Personal communication, September 26, 2013). The small sample of teachers involved in this comparison (two teachers) means that only tentative conclusions can be drawn. However, it could be suggested from this sample that Teacher Three is providing the intensive and interactive instruction that Biemiller and Boote (2006) and Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) suggest is beneficial for older students and Teacher One is providing more balanced vocabulary instruction alongside

instruction for other aspects of literacy learning. To capture a more reliable picture of teachers' practice in this area, further research might look at surveying teachers to gain their self-assessments of practice and beliefs about vocabulary instructional during shared reading.

Analysis of the way teachers of younger and older students utilised avenues for learning vocabulary and the instructional methods they used suggests a general consistency in their practice in these areas. For the teachers of younger classes, providing definitional information was the most utilised way to learn words (40%), whereas for teachers of older students, facilitating active processing was the most utilised avenue for learning words (35%). Teachers of older students tended to provide more metalinguistic information than those of younger students.

One distinction between teachers of older and younger students lies in their choice of questioning technique. Walsh and Blewitt's (2013) research indicates that young children with lower vocabulary knowledge may benefit from being asked non-eliciting questions because having the target word supplied in a question may help scaffold their growing understanding of words and this may be a more efficient way of helping them to secure word meanings than questions about words that require them to access the word itself. On the other hand, research by Sénéchal (1997) suggests that children's expressive vocabulary may benefit from word retrieval practice (accessing the word from their memory). The teachers of younger students in the current study tended to use eliciting questions more often, while the teachers of older tended to use non-eliciting questions. According to Walsh and Blewitt's (2013) research, it would be more effective for teachers of younger students to be asking non-eliciting questions. Although Sénéchal's (1997) research was also conducted with young (pre-school) children, it suggests that retrieval practice (accessing words from memory) is beneficial for all students. It could then be suggested that a more effective practice might be that an emphasis on non-eliciting questions would be appropriate for younger children with the emphasis shifting to questions that encourage more intensive use of target words for older children.

Other than these differences, all the teachers utilised a balanced range of avenues to learning words and a balanced range of techniques to support vocabulary development. All the teachers indicated during their interviews that balancing explicit instruction with contextual experience was important to them.

This aspect of the current study might be extended by observing the shared reading practices of teachers of a wider range of ages as well as increasing the number of same age groups. For instance, a study that included participant teachers of pre-school, junior, middle and senior primary school classes would provide a comprehensive comparison of practices at different levels.

Limitations of the Current Study and Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of the current study was to gain an understanding of how teachers of junior classes went about supporting vocabulary development during shared reading. To provide an in-depth examination of each participant's practice in this area, the researcher observed four teachers in two different schools conducting multiple series of shared reading sessions and subsequently conducted follow-up semi-structured interviews with each teacher. Teachers also completed brief questionnaires to provide information about themselves and the setting in which the observations took place. Although the small sample allowed the researcher to dedicate substantial time to gathering data on each participant, both the limited number of participating teachers and the small amount of schools place restrictions on the ability to generalise the findings of this study. A wider cross-section and number of schools and a larger number of participating teachers would significantly improve the ability to generalise the findings of this study. The size of the participating schools should also be accounted for when considering findings of this study. The selection process for participants involved school principals making recommendations of exemplary teachers. Larger schools would

provide greater options for selecting exemplary practitioners. Finally, the inductive process of developing criteria for analysing observation data involved would be more robust if more than one researcher was involved. The use of multiple observers observing multiple participants and concurrently generating inductive criteria would allow for a process of cross-referencing that would improve the reliability of this process.

The current study was conducted in lower decile school settings in an attempt to gain a picture of how teachers of classes that may have lower average levels of vocabulary knowledge support vocabulary during shared reading. This was a specific examination of exemplary teachers' practice in a specific (low decile) setting. This study did not attempt to conduct assessments of students to confirm average vocabulary levels of classes. It could be extended by adding an assessment of students' vocabulary levels and replicating the study in higher decile or a randomly selected sample of schools.

Besides the suggestions for variations to the current study, this research might be extended in additional studies in a number of ways. Firstly, survey methodology might be employed to gather data over a larger sample of teachers about their perceptions about the proportions of time they allocate to vocabulary support and their perceptions about the importance of supporting vocabulary during shared reading. Also, observations of larger samples of teachers might be undertaken to examine specific aspects of their shared reading practice, such as the timing of vocabulary instruction as well as specific questioning and explanation methods. In addition to this, structured interviews of a larger sample of teachers of a range of age levels may be a useful method of exploring teacher knowledge about vocabulary instruction in general and compare differences in practice at different levels. The results of this type of study could inform further action research that undertook to provide professional development in relation to how children acquire vocabulary and methods for supporting the development of word knowledge. This data could be combined with the assessment and tracking of a cohort of students to provide a picture of the effects of changes in teachers'

professional knowledge and practice on student's vocabulary development. A critical action component of this type of study may explore the benefits of different approaches to vocabulary instruction during shared reading for children who come from lower socio-economic homes.

Conclusion

The current study sought to investigate how four teachers of junior classes in two New Zealand schools go about supporting vocabulary development during shared reading. A review of the literature provided a theoretical context for the study. The review of literature pertaining to children's reading difficulties in New Zealand and the contribution of vocabulary knowledge to reading ability revealed that a substantial proportion of children in New Zealand were failing to secure adequate reading ability to support successful further learning, and that vocabulary knowledge was a key contributor to successful reading ability. A brief overview of shared reading practice in New Zealand schools suggested that shared reading should form a core component of primary class reading programmes, be carried out regularly, and that support for the development of vocabulary knowledge be a key component of shared reading instruction. An overview of research pertaining to vocabulary development suggested five key cognitive components that contribute to learning words as well as an array of associated instructional methods that help to facilitate vocabulary development. A review of literature pertaining to how teachers can best support vocabulary development while reading and discussing texts with children provided evidence to support teachers reading texts to children, reading texts repeatedly, conducting instruction and discussions about words to convey a variety of information about them in a variety of ways multiple times, and asking questions in specific ways about words. This review provided a framework to guide the research design, data gathering and analysis phases of the current study.

Analysis of observation data of the current study revealed that the average proportion of shared reading sessions spent supporting vocabulary development by the teachers in this study was 22%. The most common

number of formal shared reading sessions per series conducted by these teachers was four. This means on average just under a quarter of the observed shared reading sessions were committed to supporting vocabulary development. Although this is a significant proportion, across the teachers in this study the range of proportion of time spent supporting vocabulary development was 9%–85%. This is a noteworthy variation. Despite this, all the teachers indicated that they considered shared reading to be an important context for providing support for vocabulary development. This variation could be attributed to the choice of books used for shared reading. These teachers used a range of texts during the observed shared reading sessions. Teachers of younger students used narrative Big Books. Teachers of older students used poems, narrative Big Books, and non-fiction Big Books. The teachers of younger students were required to use Big Books and expressed concerns about the ability of these texts for providing opportunities for extending vocabulary. Teachers of older students indicated they chose texts that provided opportunities for exploring rich language.

Providing multiple exposures to words is an effective way of supporting vocabulary development during shared reading (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; McLeod & McDade, 2011; Sénéchal, 1997). The teachers in this study all provided multiple exposures to words by repeated reading of texts. They also provided additional exposures to selected words either by elaborating extensively on them during one particular shared reading session, or by revising and revisiting words on successive occasions. This showed a balanced but reasonably intensive approach to providing multiple exposures to words that research suggests is an effective way of securing knowledge about word meanings (Beck & McKeown, 2008; Biemiller & Boote, 2006).

The teachers in this study had varied practices in relation to the timing of vocabulary support during shared reading. None of the teachers followed rigid principles regarding when to engage in instruction about words in relation to reading texts, but preferred to vary timing depending on the situation and the text. Research suggests that providing additional instruction about words in close proximity to hearing and/or seeing them in

texts supports understanding (Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002). All the teachers indicated that they believed that it was important to provide instructional support in close proximity to reading words in the text rather than in isolation from the context.

The teachers in this study utilised a balanced range of avenues for supporting vocabulary development during shared reading. Across all teachers they provided definitional and context information most often. They employed a range of methods to convey definitions, including using dictionaries, relating personal experiences, using gestures and mini dramas, labelling images in the text, showing additional images not in the text, using materials and by refining word meanings provided by students. Teachers of younger students provided definitional information more often than teachers of older students. Providing context information about words was the avenue for learning words utilised most often by teachers of older students. Teachers most often provided context information by providing associated words, they also recast words in new sentences and re-read sentences in the shared text that contained the target word. All the teachers in the study regularly facilitated active processing of words by both asking questions that both included the target word and questions that elicited target words from students. They repeated student explanations and encouraged students to use gestures and dramas to illustrate word meanings. The provision of metalinguistic information was used rarely by these teachers in relation to other strategies. Teachers of younger students used this strategy less often than teachers of older students. One teacher of older students used a range of methods to support the development of metalinguistic knowledge about words, including facilitating discussions about word classes, referring students to word class lists and including words in student word analysis tasks.

Research suggests that while younger children may benefit more from hearing words in stories more than older children, older children may benefit more from instructional interactions about words beyond hearing them read (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002). The shared reading practice of the teachers in the current study

concurred with this finding. The teachers of younger students read texts slightly more often than the teachers of older students but provided slightly less additional exposures to specific words, whereas the teachers of older students read texts slightly less but provided slightly more interactions about words. Of the older students, Teacher Three in particular facilitated intensive instructional discussions about words that research suggests would be of benefit to her older group (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002).

Research by Walsh and Rose (2013) suggests that young children with lower vocabulary levels may benefit from the use of more non-eliciting questions than eliciting questions during discussions about vocabulary. The teachers of younger students in this study tended to ask more eliciting than non-eliciting questions, while the teachers of older students tended to ask more non-eliciting than eliciting questions. Although this is not a significant difference, further discussion and research about this method of instruction may be worthwhile in the future.

The current study was conducted in lower decile school settings in an attempt to examine how teachers go about teaching vocabulary during shared reading, in settings where there may be a substantial need for support for vocabulary development (Hart & Risley, 1995). All the teachers in this study indicated that they believed that shared reading was an important context for supporting vocabulary development.

All the teachers in this study utilised shared reading as a context in which to provide vocabulary support via a balanced range of avenues for learning words, using a rich and varied assortment of instructional methods to convey information and provide experiences of words. One teacher in particular dedicated a substantial proportion of her shared reading sessions to intensive and diverse discussion about word meanings that provided her students with a wealth of opportunities for vocabulary development. This study indicates that effectively supporting vocabulary development during shared reading is a complex task that requires substantial skill and careful thought. Teachers and professional

leaders would benefit from studying the practice of the exemplary practitioners described in this study to enhance their own practice.

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Appendix A – Supporting Vocabulary Development During Shared Reading – Review of Studies Summary Table

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Setting</i>	<i>Participants' age</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Type of study</i>	<i>Assessments</i>	<i>Control group?</i>	<i>Aspects of vocabulary instruction investigated</i>	<i>Results</i>
Beck & McKeown, Study 1	2007	Urban / low SES	4–7 years Kindergarten / 1 st grade teachers	121 students in 8 classes	Intervention	PPVT	Yes	Effects of vocabulary explanation and interactions	Vocabulary gains in instructed group. Sophisticated words can be learnt by young learners.
Beck & McKeown, Study 2	2007	Urban / low SES	4–7 years Kindergarten / 1 st grade teachers	76 students in 6 classes	Intervention	PPVT	Yes	Effects of vocabulary explanation and interactions plus revision	More instruction (revision) was beneficial for vocabulary knowledge (approximately 2x gains with revision condition).
Biemiller and Boote Study 1	2006	Kindergarten, 1 st grade, 2 nd grade	4–6 years 6 years 7 years	112	Intervention	PPVT Target word test	Yes - cross study comparison	2x reading 4x reading. Child definition elicited and offered Explanations after reading	Average gain of 12% with additional readings. Average gain of additional 10% with explanations.

Biemiller and Boote Study 2	2006	Canadian public schools	4–6 years 6 years 7 years	112	Intervention	PPVT Target word test	Yes - cross study comparison	2x reading 4x reading 7–10 Brief explanations during reading at each reading. Read sentence 5th day no reading - Reviewed words (read sentence and explanation).	Average 41% gain of words with additional teacher generated instruction and reviews.
Brett, Rothlein and Harley	1996	Florida USA School	9 years	61, 56, 58 (175)	Intervention	Multi-choice target word pre-post test	Yes	No story. Repeated reading. Reading plus explanation.	Repeated reading -0.2 word gain. Reading plus brief explanation 6.6 word gain.
Elley	1989	Primary schools New Zealand	7 years 8 years	157, 51, 125, 125, (458)	Intervention	Pre-test post-test of target words	Yes - no story	Repeated reading (3x). Reading + explanation	15% from reading alone. 39.9% from additional instruction

Green Brabham	2002	ECC School	6 years 8 years	students 117 1 st grade 129 3 rd grade Groups of 12 across 5 schools. Pre- service teacher– readers	Intervention		Group Compari son	Single reading performance. Reading with discussion before and after reading. Performance reading with interactions during reading	Significant increased vocabulary gains made in more interactive styles. Just reading: 5.3% for 1 st graders, performance reading 12.7% for 1 st graders and 21% for 3 rd graders, interactional reading: 25% 1 st graders and 27% for 3 rd graders.
McLeod McDade	2011	3 ECCs USA Range of SES	3–4 years	22 Caucasian 22 African American	Intervention	Language fundamentals expressive and receptive. One word picture vocabulary	Yes	Single reading Repeated reading of words in varying contexts.	Fast mapping occurs in young readers. Repeated exposure to words in varying contexts beneficial. Significantly improved gains of nouns but not verbs for repeated reading.
Nicholson and Whyte	1992		8–10 years	57	Intervention	Vocabulary assessment of 10 words from read stories	Cross groups compari son	Are better readers more proficient at learning novel words from listening to stories?	Better readers made greater vocabulary gains than poor readers after listening to the story.

Penno Wilinson and Moore	2002	New Zealand School	5–6 years	47	Intervention	Multi-choice target word pre-post test 5 scale knowledge of word schedule Retelling task	Cross conditio n	Repeated reading. Reading plus explanation	Repeated reading 0.6. Reading plus explanation 2.7. Greater gains from explanation. Children with higher vocabulary levels gained more
Robbins and Ehri	1994	Kindergarten	4–6 years	38		PPVT Target word pre / post test	Cross compari son - low/mid dle/high PPVT score groups	Read story (x2). Compared results for starting vocabulary level.	Recognised significantly more words from the stories than those that were not in the stories.
Senchal	1997	Middles- class day cares Canada	3–4 years	60 (30 for each condition)	Intervention	PPVT-R; Dunn & Dunn, 1981	3 Group Compari son	Reading. Repeated reading Interaction (Questioning)	Expressive and receptive vocabulary increased with repeated reading.
Walsh and Blewitt	2006	Kindergarten from middle/upper class urban area	Average 3 years	45 children	Intervention	PPVT	Yes	# 1 administered non-eliciting questions and #2 eliciting questions. #3 No questions	Improved knowledge of target words. No significant difference between non- eliciting and eliciting question conditions.

Walsh and Rose	2013	Urban ECC Head Start in USA	Average 4.25 years	45 children	Intervention	PPVT	Yes	# 1 administered non-eliciting questions and #2 eliciting questions. #3 No questions	Non-eliciting question group significantly higher gains than others.
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Appendix B – Principal's Observation Research Study Request Letter

1st June 2013
59 Fenwick Crescent
Hillcrest
Hamilton 3216



Observation Research Study Request Research Study Title: *How do exemplary teachers of year 0-2 students support the vocabulary development of pupils during shared reading lessons?*

Dear Principal,

I am currently undertaking a research project for my Master of Education degree. The title of my research project is: *How do exemplary teachers of years 0-2 classes support the vocabulary development of their students during shared reading lessons?* I hope to explore the different strategies that exemplary teachers use in this literacy context to help their students learn new word meanings.

I am contacting you because your school has been identified by the University of Waikato as one that exemplifies good literacy practice.

I am particularly interested in how young students acquire and develop their vocabulary knowledge and how this supports the development of early reading skills. One of the primary contexts for helping young students develop their vocabulary is during shared reading. I am interested in how teachers can best support this process within their literacy programmes. For this reason I am interested in observing the teaching practice of exemplary teachers of literacy in junior classes (year 0-2) in order to build a picture of good practice.

My study will involve up to ten observations of each teacher during shared reading. I will collect audio recordings of sessions. Teachers will be asked to complete a brief classroom/teacher profile questionnaire, and a brief questionnaire regarding vocabulary teaching in contexts other than shared reading. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the teachers.

On completion of the study I will provide a summary of the findings and arrange a time, suitable to the teachers, to answer questions.

To identify exemplary teachers I am seeking principals' recommendations. If you believe you have a teacher or teachers in your school who represent exemplary teaching of emergent literacy and are happy for your school to participate in this study I would be very keen to hear from you.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to help me with my research. If you have any queries concerning the nature of the research or are unclear about the extent of your involvement in it please contact me at johnpaulonz@gmail.com.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request. I will contact you by phone shortly to discuss my research with you.

(N.B. Please refer to the information sheet attached for further information including confidentiality, anonymity and participant's rights.)

Yours sincerely,

John-Paul Oliver

B.Ed, Dip. Primary Teaching,

Grad. Dip Teaching Students with Hearing Impairment

Appendix C – Principal's Information Sheet

Principal's Information Sheet



Project Title

How do exemplary teachers of year 0-2 students support the vocabulary development of pupils during shared reading lessons?

Purpose

This research is conducted as partial requirement for Master of Education degree. This project requires the researcher to choose a topic and conduct research on the topic through using surveys, observations or interviews or a combination of the these techniques.

What is this research project about?

This research aims to investigate the strategies that teachers use to support year 0-2 students' vocabulary development. A primary context for introducing more complex vocabulary is during the shared reading sessions. This research aims to examine how exemplary teachers teach vocabulary during these sessions.

What will teachers in your school have to do and how long will it take?

The study will involve the researcher observing the instructional component of up to ten shared reading lessons. The duration of each observation will most likely be about 20 minutes, but this may vary. These sessions will be recorded by the researcher. Teachers will be asked to conduct lessons as they normally would. Teachers will be asked to complete a class and teacher profile questionnaire before observations begin (this should take about 10 minutes to complete), and participate in a semi-structured interview.

What will happen to the information collected?

The information collected will be used by the researcher to write a research report for credit towards his M.Ed thesis. It is possible that articles and presentations may be the outcome of the research. Only the researcher and supervisor will be privy to the notes, documents, recordings, which will be kept for 5 years in a secure location. Afterwards, notes, documents will be destroyed and recordings erased. The researcher will keep transcriptions of the recordings and a copy of the paper but will treat them with the strictest confidentiality. No participants will be named in the publications and every effort will be made to disguise their identity.

Declaration to participants

If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study before analysis has commenced on the data.
- Ask any further questions about the study that occurs to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of findings from the study when it is concluded.

What will you be required to do?

As a principal you will be requested to nominate individual teachers of years 0-2 in their schools who you consider to be exemplary teachers of literacy. As a professional leader you will be requested to give your consent to the study being conducted in your school.

Who's responsible?

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Researcher: *John-Paul Oliver*
59 Fenwick Crescent, Hillcrest
Hamilton 3216
Ph: (07) 856-6311
Mb: 021 144 0704
E-mail: johnpaulonz@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr. Sue Dymock
 Senior Lecturer
 Faculty of Education
 University of Waikato
 Ph: (07) 838-4466 ext 7717
 E-mail: sdymock@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix D – Invitation Letter – Board of Trustees



17th June 2013

59 Fenwick Crescent
Hillcrest
Hamilton 3216

Chairperson
Board of Trustees

Dear _____

Observation Research Study Request

I am currently undertaking a research project for my Master of Education degree. The title of my research project is: *How do exemplary teachers of year 0-2 students support the vocabulary development of pupils during shared reading lessons?* I am hoping to explore the different strategies that teachers use in this literacy context to help their students learn new word meanings. One of the primary contexts for helping young students develop vocabulary is during shared reading. For this reason I am interested in observing two teachers at your school during shared reading.

My study will involve up to ten observations of each teacher during shared reading teaching lessons. I will audio record sessions. Teachers will be asked to complete a brief classroom profile questionnaire, and participate in a semi-structured interview to investigate their vocabulary teaching in contexts other than during shared reading.

On completion of the study I will provide a summary of the findings and arrange a time, suitable to the teachers, to answer questions.

In order to complete this study I require access to schools. Your school has been identified by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education as one that exemplifies good literacy practice. The purpose of this letter is to seek permission to conduct the research described above in your school. I have met with the principal and she/he has given permission, subject to Board of Trustees' approval. Following Board of Trustees approval I will contact class teachers nominated by the principal.

I sincerely hope that your school will be able to help me with my research. If you have any queries concerning the nature of the please contact me at johnpaulonz@gmail.com or my supervisor Dr.Sue Dymock at sdymock@waikato.ac.nz .

Finally, I would like to thank you for taking the time to consider my request, and I look forward to your reply.

(N.B. Please refer to the information sheet attached for further information regarding confidentiality, anonymity and participant's rights.)

Yours sincerely,

John-Paul Oliver

B.Ed, Dip. Primary Teaching, Grad. Dip Teaching Students with Hearing Impairment

Appendix E – Information Sheet – Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees Information Sheet



Project Title

How do exemplary teachers of year 0-2 students support the vocabulary development of pupils during shared reading lessons?

Purpose

This research is conducted as partial requirement for Master of Education degree. This project requires the researcher to choose a topic and conduct research on the topic through the use of surveys, observations or interviews or a combination of the these techniques.

What is this research project about?

This research aims to investigate the strategies that teachers use to support year 0-2 students' vocabulary development. A primary context for introducing more complex vocabulary is during shared reading lessons. This research aims to examine how exemplary teachers teach vocabulary during these sessions.

What will teachers in your school have to do and how long will it take?

The study will involve the researcher observing the instructional component of up to ten shared reading lessons. The duration of each observation will most likely be about 20 minutes, but this may vary. These sessions will be recorded by the researcher. Teachers will be asked to conduct lessons as they normally would. Teachers will be asked to complete a class and teacher profile questionnaire before observations begin (this should take about 10 minutes to complete), and participate in a semi-structured interview.

What will happen to the information collected?

The information collected will be used by the researcher to write a research report for credit towards his M.Ed thesis. It is possible that articles and presentations may be the outcome of the research. Only the researcher and supervisor will be privy to the notes, documents, recordings, which will be kept for 5 years in a secure location. Afterwards, notes, documents will be destroyed and recordings erased. The researcher will keep transcriptions of the recordings and a copy of the paper but will treat them with the strictest confidentiality. No participants will be named in the publications and every effort will be made to disguise their identity.

Declaration to participants

Participants have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study before analysis has commenced on the data.
- Ask any further questions about the study that occurs to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of findings from the study when it is concluded.

Who's responsible?

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Researcher: *John-Paul Oliver*
59 Fenwick Crescent
Hillcrest
Hamilton 3216
Ph: (07) 856-6311
Mb: 021 144 0704
E-mail: johnpaulonz@gmail.com

Supervisor: *Dr. Sue Dymock*
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Education
University of Waikato
Ph: (07) 838-4466 ext 7717
E-mail: sdymock@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix F – Consent Form – Board of Trustees

Consent Form for Board of Trustees



How do exemplary teachers of year 0-2 students support the vocabulary development of pupils during shared reading lessons?

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw my school from the study up to the time of data analysis, or to decline to have my school participate in the study. I understand I can withdraw any information my school has provided up until the time teachers have checked transcripts. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Participant Information Sheet**.

I agree to the participation of my school in this study under the conditions set out in the **Participant Information Sheet**.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix G – Teacher's Invitation Letter



29th July 2013

59 Fenwick Crescent
Hillcrest
Hamilton 3216

Dear _____,

Observation Research Study Request

I am currently undertaking a research project for my Master of Education Degree Course. I was wondering if you would allow me to carry out some observations of your teaching.

The title of my research project is: How do expert teachers of years 0-2 classes support the vocabulary development of their students during shared book sessions? I hope to explore the different strategies that teachers use in this literacy context to help their students learn new word meanings. Please refer to the attached information sheet for further information.

Before you agree to be observed I can confirm that:

- The principal of your school has nominated you as an exemplary teacher in this area and has given permission for this research to be carried out.
- The Board of Trustees have given permission for this research to be carried out.
- Your anonymity will be maintained at all times and no data will be ascribed to you by name in any written document or verbal presentation. Nor will any data be used from the observation that might identify you to a third party.
- You will be free to withdraw from the research at any time and/or request that the record of your observation not be used.

- A copy of the observation schedule will be sent to you seven days before the observations begin.
- I will write to you on completion of the research and a copy of my final research report will be made available to you upon request.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to help me with my research. If you have any queries concerning the nature of the research or are unclear about the extent of your involvement in it please contact me at johnpaulonz@gmail.com.

Finally, can I thank you for taking the time to consider my request and I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

John-Paul Oliver

B.Ed, Dip. Primary Teaching,

Grad. Dip Teaching Students with Hearing Impairment

Appendix H – Information Sheet for Participating Teachers

Participant Information Sheet



Project Title

How do exemplary teachers of year 0-4 students support the vocabulary development of pupils during shared reading lessons?

Purpose

This research is conducted as partial requirement for Master of Education degree. This project requires the researcher to choose a topic and conduct research on the topic through the use of surveys, observations or interviews or a combination of the these techniques.

What is this research project about?

This research aims to investigate the strategies that teachers use to support year 0-4 students' vocabulary development. A primary context for introducing more complex vocabulary is during shared reading lessons. This research aims to examine how exemplary teachers teach vocabulary during these sessions.

What will teachers in your school have to do and how long will it take?

The study will involve the researcher observing the instructional component of up to ten shared reading lessons. The duration of each observation will most likely be about 20 minutes, but this may vary. These sessions will be recorded by the researcher. Teachers will be asked to conduct lessons as they normally would. Teachers will be asked to complete a class and teacher profile questionnaire before observations begin (this should take about 10 minutes to complete), and participate in a semi-structured interview.

What will happen to the information collected?

The information collected will be used by the researcher to write a research report for credit towards his M.Ed thesis. It is possible that articles and presentations may be the outcome of the research. Only the researcher and supervisor will be privy to the notes, documents, recordings, which will be kept for 5 years in a secure location. Afterwards, notes, documents will be destroyed and recordings erased. The researcher will keep transcriptions of the recordings and a copy of the paper but will treat them with the strictest confidentiality. No participants will be named in the publications and every effort will be made to disguise their identity.

Declaration to participants

Participants have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study before analysis has commenced on the data.
- Ask any further questions about the study that occurs to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of findings from the study when it is concluded.

Who's responsible?

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Researcher: *John-Paul Oliver*
59 Fenwick Crescent
Hillcrest
Hamilton 3216
Ph: (07) 856-6311
Mb: 021 144 0704
E-mail: johnpaulonz@gmail.com

Supervisor: *Dr. Sue Dymock*
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Education
University of Waikato
Ph: (07) 838-4466 ext 7717
E-mail: sdymock@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix I – Consent Form for Participating Teachers

Consent Form for Participants (Teachers)



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

How do exemplary teachers of year 0-2 students support vocabulary development of pupils during shared reading lessons?

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study up to the time of transcript approval, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I understand I can withdraw any information I have provided up until the time I have checked transcripts. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Participant Information Sheet**.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Participant Information Sheet**.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Additional Consent

I agree / do not agree to my responses to be tape recorded.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix J – Questionnaire for Teachers



Shared Reading Practices in Junior Classes

Class and Teacher Profile

1. Approximately how many students attend your school?
2. How many students are currently in your class?
3. What is the approximate time that students in your class have been at school?
(Please state this as a range (e.g. 1 year to 1 year and 6 months).)
4. Do you have English as a second language learners in your class? If so please state how many.
5. Do you have students with significant additional learning needs in your class? If so please state how many and what their needs are.
6. What is the range of reading levels in your class? (Please state this as a level range, e.g. magenta to yellow 3.)
7. Approximately how often (per week) do you read to your class? Please indicate the type and proportion of reading you undertake (e.g. shared reading: x3, reading to: x 5).
8. Approximately how often do you conduct shared reading sessions and for how long (i.e. every day for 30 minutes/ 2 x a week for an hour)?
9. How long have you taught students at the current level? Have you taught other levels, if so which ones and for how long?
10. How long have you been teaching primary school students?
11. Have you attended seminars or professional development workshops that have provided information about vocabulary teaching strategies? If so please provide details.